



BRANDING SUSTAINABILITY AT THE AIRPORTS OF AMSTERDAM AND FRANKFURT

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this master thesis is to demonstrate the promotion of sustainability at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Frankfurt Airport. Due to challenges the aviation industry has been facing in the last few months, sustainability has remained a high priority, and the airports still develop and introduce new plans. During this research, the official websites and social media of Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports have been analyzed under the scope of critical discourse analysis. I decided to research the area of airport branding from an environmental point of view. In my thesis, I linked the sustainability discourse with the place branding discourse because tourists need to be informed about the aspect of sustainability. In order to make people aware of these problematics, a good brand of a place is necessary, while sustainability remains an essential element. In addition, I physically visited both airports for a better image of the sustainable branding there and conducted interviews with the marketing department representatives. The reason for this choice is that both airports are top-ranked in direct connectivity and have a high ranking of sustainability. My analysis of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Frankfurt Airport demonstrates the importance of language and image and how location, color or vocabulary of environmentally friendly advertising can influence and manipulate the visitors. Finally, the research provides a critical view of how airports have an impact on the understanding and knowledge of sustainable consumption by linking it to the fact that they can affect the importance of environmental sustainability.

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Table of contents

Abstract	3
List of tables	7
1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
1.1 Problem definition	12
1.2 Literature review.....	13
1.2.1 Demarcation of the research object.....	14
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	16
2.1 Theories of tourism studies.....	16
2.2 Theories of sustainability.....	19
2.3 Theories of marketing.....	24
3 METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis	31
3.2 Interviews	33
3.3 Data collection.....	33
3.4 Data analysis.....	34
3.5 Indication of structure.....	35
4 ANALYSIS	36
4.1 Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.....	37
4.2 Frankfurt Airport	49
4.3 Interviews with the professionals	61
5 CONCLUSION.....	68
5.1 Conclusions	68
5.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research	70
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY	72
Appendix	76

List of tables

Figure 1 'Check-in to Sustainability' campaign (Brandingabetterworld.com)	40
Figure 2 Schiphol Twitter background picture (Twitter)	42
Figure 3 Schiphol branding for electric flying (Twitter).....	43
Figure 4 Wildlife trafficking advertisement at Schiphol Airport (own source).....	45
Figure 5 LED lighting at Schiphol Airport (own source)	46
Figure 6 Sustainable advertisement KLM at Schiphol Airport (own source).....	48
Figure 7 Germany Climate Masterplan (Twitter)	51
Figure 8 Frankfurt Airport branding environmental performance (Twitter).....	53
Figure 9 Frankfurt Airport branding photovoltaic system (Twitter).....	54
Figure 11 Bottle return machine at Frankfurt airport (own source).....	56
Figure 12 Electric vehicle at Frankfurt Airport (own source) Figure 13 Eco-stamp on the electric vehicle at.....	57
Figure 14 Sustainable advertisement Germany Works at Frankfurt Airport (own source)	58
Figure 15 Sustainable advertisement Dell at Frankfurt Airport (own source).....	60
Figure 16 Key stakeholder groups (Sustainability Fraport 2019)	65

1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since I started to travel and visit airports, I have been observing them, and I have always been fascinated by the presence of eye-catching, spectacular advertisements. Advertising is a powerful tool that engages the passengers and contributes to the overall atmosphere of the spaces we inhabit. When airports started to be more environmentally conscious, the visibility of their sustainable practices appeared in the branding as well. Therefore, with growing experience in the area of cultural tourism, I have come to examine these matters in a broader sense.

The central part of the work consists of analyzing the sustainable presentation of Amsterdam and Frankfurt airports. In the beginning, it is appropriate to approach the concepts and theories of tourism, sustainability, and brand. We should keep in mind that the brand is no longer something that should be left in the last place when building a company. It is the flagship of the airport, which will also ensure its success in the future. This master thesis deals mainly with the strength of the sustainable brands of the two chosen airports and their effects on the surrounding factors. The proposed research intends to demonstrate that by using various data collected on the airports' websites and social media, a deeper analysis of the sustainability discourse and implementing it can be a valuable tool for realizing the importance of long-term plans for a better future. In order to analyze and explain the branding sustainability practices related to the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Frankfurt Airport, my research question has been formulated as:

How is the discourse of sustainability currently applied in the branding of Amsterdam and Frankfurt airports?

Furthermore, to enrich this research by showing the results of this comparative case, it would bring us to other sub-questions: (1) To what degree there is a difference in the sustainability place branding of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Frankfurt Airport? (2) What can these two airports learn from each other in terms of sustainability presentation?

Regarding the methodological background, I would like to focus on analyzing and exploring my research topic by using quantitative and qualitative data. These can be found on the official websites of the airports, where they provide us with the annual/sustainability reports and various articles written by people working on projects related to sustainability or customer satisfaction. Additionally, professionals from Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports will

be interviewed. Before analyzing the gathered data, I will decide on primary goals and try to gain a fundamental understanding of the topic I am dealing with. This includes an in-depth study of what sustainability means and what role it plays in the aviation industry. The theoretical framework will be discussed. The relationships between climate change and its effects on the aviation industry will be evaluated, resulting in sustainability processes within the airports. My plan is also to collect the primary data myself on social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, where it is possible to research with members of these social media platforms. They form communities interested in sustainable aviation related to the Royal Schiphol Group or Frankfurt Airport, which allows us to see the unprompted feelings and positive/negative opinions of followers of the airport's accounts and see the actual response of the airport's representation. For further examination, this research will use critical discourse analysis.

Moreover, at a macro level, I would like to analyze what social issues are of particular importance at the time of the pandemic. From the micro-level perspective, I would look at the actual information of what they say about sustainability and examine some linguistic features. These include: How are words expressed to show the problem? How are over wording, synonymy, and antonymy used to construct the ideology? Are there any rather unclear expressions because they do not provide enough information or do not express what they are supposed to? To conclude the analysis, I would demonstrate the effects of sustainability practices and their presentation in the context of aviation.

In the first chapter, the methodologies that will be used to address the research questions will be examined. First of all, I will be using the theories of marketing, sustainability, and tourism studies. However, for the critical discourse analysis, the framework by Norman Fairclough (2010) will be applied when analyzing the written and visual representations of the airports. This approach is relevant for this research because the methodology offers a step-by-step guide to the study, including written and visual forms of communication. Therefore, it provides the chance to discover the interpretations published on the website, social media accounts, and the physical location.

Moreover, scholars such as Urry (2011) or Fitzpatrick (2015) contributed to the area of tourism studies which provide an in-depth overview of the concepts of tourist gaze and sense of place. Other theoretical frameworks relevant to my research study include the marketing concepts, such as theories on place branding (Kotler & Keller, 2007), corporate responsibility (Elkington, 1997), and green marketing (Ward, 2018). And finally, since the discourse of sustainability is needed for a deeper understanding and its implementation, a part of the

theoretical framework is derived from authors such as Pulido-Fernández and López-Sánchez (2016), Sofronov (2017), and others. Furthermore, an important source that provided me with information about Sustainable Development Goals or Agenda 2030 is the official website of the World Tourism Organization. All the used sources are mentioned in the bibliography.

As the air transport system is one of the main elements of the tourism industry, which accounts for part of tourists' spending, so that in planning for tourism development, I think paying attention to these parts is very important. Also, as the question of sustainability has become a common topic and sustainable aviation itself has the responsibility towards society and future generations, I would like to deal with this aspect and explore how the Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports are aware of the sustainability challenges and coping with these in the last few months. The aviation industry is well-known for being a rapidly developing and transforming industry, particularly in terms of technological and passenger quality of expectation trends. While all the trends play an important role in airport branding, one might say that the more facilities and infrastructure an airport provides, the better the service its passengers can get. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how airports can build a successful brand profile, which can be produced by identifying the correct brand values and using them to the best use for the airport's brand positioning.

The corporate identity of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

Amsterdam Schiphol Airport is the largest Dutch airport and one of the busiest air hubs in Europe. It is the home base of KLM and many others and a hub for many international connections. The airport is vast and has up to 6 runways. More than 72 million passengers use the airport's services every year. (Schiphol annual report, 2019) Amsterdam Schiphol Airport presents itself as a trusted company that faces new challenges every year. Its priority characteristics are high quality, reliability, and, last but not least, sustainability. The airport offers passengers a clear and functional advertisement through its website.

As the aviation sector is responsible for 2% of the CO₂ emissions at a global level and 7% of the emissions are in the Netherlands, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport has decided to work on helping our environment, and their goal is to decrease the aviation emissions. Amsterdam Schiphol Airport cooperates with the Royal Schiphol Group, whose plan is to become a zero-emission airport by 2030, which means eliminating all the emissions from their airport activities and ground operations on the airside. They came up with the plan called Smart and Sustainable with the agenda which aims to improve the aviation's sector impact on the environment. In

addition, the airport management created so-called Sustainable Passenger Journey section that actively informs passengers about sustainability and offers sustainable travel options, facilitates sustainable choices for passengers, and create awareness on how to increase positive social and decrease negative environmental impact, as well as fighting wildlife and human trafficking, and conservation of nature are essential themes (Sustainability Roadmap 2030).

According to Schiphol Annual report 2014, the airport was granted Airport Carbon Accreditation 3+ for its CO₂ emissions reduction efforts, earning the airport a place among the world's most sustainable airports, thanks to what the airport is the world's first hub airport to obtain the highest status (3+) in the Airport Council International (ACI)'s Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) system. Additionally, the Royal Schiphol Group reduces its own emissions through the more efficient use and application of sustainable energy and fuels because, since 2012, they have pursued the goal of CO₂-neutral business operations (Schiphol Annual report 2014).

The corporate identity of Frankfurt Airport

Frankfurt International Airport is the central air hub in Germany. It is owned by the public company Fraport AG, which is responsible for its operation. The airport's strategies focus on long-term developments and market trends in global air transport. Frankfurt Airport is notable for its size and expansion in recent years. In 2005, Frankfurt Airport proceeded with a significant increase in Terminal 1, increasing the terminal's capacity by 4 million equipped passengers per year. The reason was that the airport faced capacity constraints due to the constant increase in demand for air transport. According to statista.com, the number of passengers in 2019 reached 70.6 million at Frankfurt Airport. Due to the global pandemic, the numbers dropped to 18.8 million passengers in 2020, which means a 73% reduction compared to the previous year.

During the last few years, the airport has been growing and expanding its terminals. The monitoring of the airport's expansion by the public is caused mainly for environmental protection reasons. Despite the undeniable positive impact on the regional economy, there has been a strong resistance of the society against further development of the airport. Frankfurt Airport is currently a successful ACA program. The airport was also the first accredited airport under this program in September 2009. The new buildings at the airport save energy and reduce carbon emissions. However, concerning the Airport Carbon Accreditation Level 3, Frankfurt Airport achieved it for the first time in 2020 (Fraport AG, 2020).

As stated in the *Building the future* section, published on the airport's official website, sustainable operation is also ensured by the use of daylight and exclusive use of LED lamps. In addition, they want to make the airport's conditions and environment as pleasant as possible, not only for passengers but also for employees. Christoph Mäckler, the architect of Terminal 3, argues that “today, airports have become destinations in themselves, and most of them receive more visitors than many downtown areas, which makes it even more essential for airports to perform many of the same functions as cities.”

1.1 Problem definition

Discourse on sustainability has become a common topic nowadays. However, there is inevitable confusion in the tourism industry since many organizations have different ideas about sustainability. Therefore, to see how particular organizations and tourists reflect on sustainability and which fundamentals they consider essential, research will be conducted on the self-presentation of the two airports. Showing that with their practices, they really contribute to a sustainable society and making the customers more aware of parts of sustainability, which requires more attention and improvement means the successful interpretation of their practices. Moreover, I expect the findings to show that the companies present sustainable practices but still prefer to highlight experiential aspects of sustainability in their promotion, like authenticity and tranquility and, more importantly, education.

Air pollution and other contaminations are more and more becoming a global issue, and the fact that worldwide, the demand for aviation doubles every 15 years makes companies worldwide act and think of a better future. “Sustainability means different things to different people depending on political and scientific viewpoints” (Kidd, 1992). However, achieving sustainability is one of the most significant challenges we are facing. The aviation industry seems to have high relevance, and many countries in the world have been dealing with creating a sustainable future.

Airports have been increasingly involved with environmental issues these times. According to Hans-Joachim Bues (airport.nridigital.com, 2021), as a part of the sustainability plan, European airports committed by ACI Europe to reach net-zero carbon emissions for activities and strategies under their control by 2050, at the latest. Hence, I consider my research to be novel and vital, especially in the times of COVID-19 since the airport recovery will require

higher efficiency and performance in all areas. However, to allow passengers to fly again, it will be necessary for the airports to provide services that would be environmentally sustainable. On that account, the importance of making passengers aware of sustainable practices should be a must because people have been seeking more sustainable travel possibilities. They want to see that the places they are visiting are committed to changing the world for a better place. Therefore, the climate emergency should remain a central aspect of a post-COVID-19 business strategy for the airport industry in the future.

1.2 Literature review

Before looking deeper into the study of the key case study and the primary sources, it is important to outline the academic research accompanying the current topic's research. My project is going to be based on the discourse of sustainability and branding regarding these two airports. Research about sustainable aviation has been done from different perspectives by many people. However, I haven't found any research directly connected and related to the Schiphol Amsterdam Airport regarding marketing and presenting themselves as sustainable.

The literature that will be discussed here is about sustainable aviation and marketing. In addition, I will provide details from airport branding literature. However, since the sustainable branding of Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports is a relatively recent phenomenon, there has not been detailed research on the analysis of their presentation yet. On the other hand, the existing available literature study presents literature on the sustainable brand of companies, place branding, marketing, and sense of place that provides an overview of the current state of the problem.

To begin with, a research paper of the relevant literature discusses the aspect of sustainability as a comparative case of four selected European airlines based on the airlines' annual reports by a student from the University of Twente in Enschede (Kesore, 2020). However, her research is also focused only on Europe and so cannot apply to other geographical areas in the world. In that paper, public awareness and interest for sustainability are highlighted, as this industry is growing to be a critical aspect of the airline industry's future. The main result of this comparative case is that the overall goal of airlines is to be considered legitimate in order to generate profit. Therefore, according to her analysis, the sustainability reports of the selected European airlines principally serve the purpose of self-promotion. Hence, they can be

considered a marketing strategy of image-making for a better company appearance. In my thesis, I will try to map how Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports deal with this aspect and whether similar results can be identified.

There has also been scholarly research explicitly done on passenger perceptions of the green image associated with airlines. For example, the group of authors conducted surveys at Liverpool John Lennon Airport in order to find out the perceptions of passengers when seeing a sustainable brand and what they think of the airport initiatives for safety and environmental friendliness. According to Mayer et al. (2012), travelers consider the use of newer aircraft to be much more successful than an airline's optimistic approach toward the environment. Therefore, this demonstrates the importance of the tangible elements of the marketing mix when producing a green brand of the company. In that case, interestingly, passengers do not take the business model of an airline into account, which means that they do not consider the low-cost carriers to be less environmentally friendly. Instead, the marketing presentation is a significant, influential force that influences travelers' expectations.

To summarize, I believe that by building on the scholars mentioned above and series of literature in the theoretical framework, which I outline below, I will be able to build on these ideas and the future questions for this thesis. Most of these research papers are from fields such as tourism studies and management and marketing communication. In the following pages, I will present the relevant theories and how they will contribute to this thesis.

1.2.1 Demarcation of the research object

This thesis identifies and analyzes the presentation of sustainable practices of two chosen airports. Many big airports in the world could be interpreted in terms of sustainability presentation. Still, I chose Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Frankfurt Airport for various reasons. Both Schiphol and Frankfurt belong to the group of airports in Europe with the highest numbers of passengers, best connectivity, and most importantly, being responsible towards the environment.

This study aims to investigate how particular parts of the aviation industry brand themselves as sustainable and how aware they are of their branding practices are. The growth of aviation-related activities towards sustainability has resulted in a very positive development of aviation infrastructure, which resulted in better tourism, prosperity, and pride. The intention of

this case is also to make a valuable contribution towards understanding the discourse of sustainability and its promotion, as well as detecting potential sustainability issues in the airline industry by researching sustainability practices at the airport. Another purpose is to determine how well-informed the staff operating Amsterdam Schiphol Airport is about sustainability and if their self-presentation of being sustainable is applied correctly. Several measures can be implemented in the short term, but for the complete modification to fully sustainable flight services, long-term plans are needed. However, customers might no longer be satisfied with organizations that show only short-term practices but instead focus on long-term strategies. Additionally, the goal is to find out if there is a need to improve the brand image for the customers and if there is a necessity to stress the competitive advantage. In case improvements can be made towards the brand image, it could result in strengthening the company development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the airline industry and the sustainability practices and reports of actors in aviation, such as airports, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers. For example, KLM, the dominant Amsterdam Schiphol Airport airline, presented 2020 as an “extremely challenging year” for them. This thesis will explore sustainability branding and how it is being delivered using the method of critical discourse analysis. This particular research method functions as a tool to gain insights, analyze if their presentation is clear enough and how the words expressing the problem are used and delivered to a customer.

Even though the aviation industry is relatively new, the sustainability aspect related to this field is getting more critical. According to Dahl, sustainable aviation fuel provides a cleaner alternative to fossil fuel, achieving an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over the fuel’s lifecycle than conventional fossil jet fuel. International organizations are pushing for stronger regulations, and more essentially, they are presenting them to the customers who need and want to understand their plans. There have been few kinds of research done related to sustainability discourse at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, which will be mentioned in the literature review below. To these, I would like to contribute to this thesis by further examination. The analysis offers an analytical and methodological approach in examining which the management of Royal Schiphol Group implements strategies and tools to improve the aspect of sustainability and its long-term development.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theories of tourism studies

In order to answer the research question of how the discourse of sustainability is currently applied in the brand image of Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt airports, it is essential to examine theories of tourism, sustainability, and place branding. The main concepts I will use for the analysis have been taken from the literature on the tourist gaze and place branding. Another concept used for further study of the airports' identities is the concept of sustainable development and its characteristics that are important to provide a theoretical background to what will be researched. Moreover, I included in the theoretical framework also information on the 2030 Agenda, which represents a plan for a better future and is relevant for both chosen airports' development and sustainable practices.

Tourism is the most significant movement of people globally, accounting for one-twelfth of world trade and one-tenth of world employment and gross national product on a global scale. The enormous importance of this sector is now a matter of course, but its economic contribution to the social, cultural, and political significance of this phenomenon is still emphasized. Many phenomena associated with travel are increasingly becoming central to financial restructuring, globalization, and the aestheticization of everyday life. Therefore, there is a process of *touristification* in which society integrates tourism into its economic and socio-cultural system (Bugalski, 2020, p. 1). According to Cohen (2003, p. 373), the four most frequent areas of interest in sociological research in tourism are 1. tourists themselves, their roles, motivations, attitudes, and experiences; 2. relations between tourists and the local population; 3. structure of the tourism system; 4. the socio-cultural and socio-economic consequences of tourism. The enormous importance of this sector is now a matter of course, but its economic contribution to the social, cultural, and political importance of this phenomenon is still emphasized.

Tourist gaze

In my thesis, I am going to use Urry's concept of the tourist gaze because while the aviation industry has formed an essential part in the growth of tourism and it is very well-documented by scholars (e.g., Graham, 2008; Spasojevic, 2017), they paid little attention so far to the role of aviation and airports in the process of experiencing and perceiving the place by

its passengers. Place branding can be an effective tool for building a strong and trustworthy tourist gaze by producing an experience that reflects the representations used in their branding. Since the airport is said to be the first and last representative of the destination for passengers, creating a successful tourism experience in the airport environment has the potential to improve the relationship between the tourist, airport, and place, thus leading to their desire to return and facilitating development for both the aviation and tourism industries (Brilha, 2008).

The concept of the tourist gaze, on the other hand, is very relevant to places that want to build an identity and attract visitors. As a result, if people can perceive the visual representations of the place, branding itself will support their distribution and attention. Therefore, creating a positive tourist gaze. Increased brand power can raise the attractiveness of a place in the eyes of tourists. An important aspect in tourism that is considered to be a general practice of perceiving the place is the tourist gaze. In my analysis, I will use the concepts of tourist gaze and sense of place on visual representations, especially according to where they are placed in the airport space.

Urry's ideas are based on the assumption that being a tourist is one characteristic feature of modern experience and an important status-creating factor in modern society. It is the concept of the tourist gaze which summarizes the experience of tourists and is an interpretation of what different tourists (from other social groups, in different societies and periods) are looking for and what they do during the holidays, i.e., time out of work, duty, and everyday life. The term gaze is to be understood as a term that includes the method of viewing the world and which at the same time gives shape to what is seen and defines the predominant way of looking. The "tourist gaze" can thus interpret the whole way of life for us at a certain period since it is constructed in relation to its counterpart, to non-tourist forms of social experience and consciousness (Urry, 2013). Tourists tend to have high expectations of what they should receive since 'going away' is generally endowed with significance and anticipated through advertising and marketing undertaken by tourist organizations (Urry, 2013). He also argues that the tourism industry is naturally competitive since almost every place in the world can act as a target of the tourist gaze.

Urry (2013) is also focused on the aspect of mobility in the broader sense while he writes about different types of travel. These are, for example, physical journey, imaginative travel, and virtual travel. However, he emphasized that mobility, both as a metaphor and as a process, is fundamental to today's society, and that's why it should be a central topic of sociological analysis. It highlights the importance of these mobilities, people's movements, images, and

information that produce social and cultural life. Cultures themselves are mobile, which is the result of mobilities that support the diversity of social life. Significant mobility and forms of mobility have a radical impact on how people experience the world and how forms of subjectivity and sociability do change. Mobilities are currently creating social life as such and not just tourist life.

Sense of place

Airports have evolved as destinations in their own right. They are designed with the idea of airport customer service in mind, and they recognize passengers, both company and leisure, as their guests (placebrandobserver.com, 2016). Airports have evolved into diverse transport and service environments, with a strong awareness that a comfortable and stress-free travel environment opens up a huge window of possibilities for non-aeronautical revenues. Creating a sense of place in and through the airport has become a widespread practice since airports function as natural gateways and also serve as the first medium of contact with the local destination. Not only are tourists requesting a sense of place in today's airports, but airports have a distinct potential to raise their gross income by providing it. Airport branding helps to create a sense of place. Airports will need to develop their culture and reliability in order to increase traffic and promote customer interaction – all of which can be accomplished by the process of designing interactions that represent a sense of place (Fitzpatrick, 2015). Many of these advantages add to non-flight income, which will indirectly boost the airport's appeal to airlines and raise flight revenue. Incorporating a sense of place into the airport culture will, in effect, be a “win-win” scenario for all parties concerned – airports, airlines, passengers, and the local community.

Social experiences and events involving travelers are also present at some airports in order to promote place values and destination profiles. Passenger's visual consumption, which is defined as tourist gaze, helps increase the tourist experience's consumption. Both of these efforts to build a sense of place in the airport will improve passenger airport experience and allow passengers to interact with the place emotionally. However, to understand a sense of place, the geographic concept of space needs to be defined first. Physical and human characteristics create a sense of place. It is a perception of a location that has a unique identity. Binder argues that places worldwide struggle with the survival and sustainability of their sense of place, authenticity, and community. She explains that the reason is a lack of recognition of a sense of place, which is why there is not a good balance between tourism interests and the community's needs.

The experience of participation and interaction necessarily involves presence (being in) and activity (being with), which are both mediated by environmental, historical, social, and cultural factors that lead to the creation of a common sense of place (Campelo et al., 2013). The scholars also show how the destination brand identity is formed by the sense of place, which is defined by the symbols, definitions, qualities, and behavior that reflect the perception of the place. Understanding the context and purpose of the sense of place contributes to deciding what should be represented and how it should be portrayed to meet stakeholder and customer needs. Urry (1995) proposes that an emphasis on consumer culture is critical for understanding how places are associated with meanings due to a dynamic, spatialized politics in which 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are difficult to distinguish. Essentially, research on the sense of place examines the sentiments of attachment that humans develop concerning physical places and can be defined as the emotional, cognitive, and functional bonds with a place (Wonk & Kler, 2013).

2.2 Theories of sustainability

Theories of sustainability are important pillars for understanding the brands that are going to be analyzed. The three most important aspects of sustainability are explained below since each of them must be taken into consideration when creating a good sustainable image of a company. In the context of aviation tourism, social responsibility, and stimulation of the development of sustainable practices in the tourism industry, important aspects are to be mentioned. A lot of travelers choose companies that support sustainability. However, it requires more than a few environmentally friendly slogans to make quality and long-term brand loyalty.

People have different associations when they hear the word “sustainability”. It is essential to point out that sustainability means something different in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the context of climate change. In the former, it means a way of financial survival, and in the latter, it means the survival of our planet. According to Hoffman (2017, p. 20), “pursuing sustainable business practices allows companies to find not only areas of improvement but also a source of competitive advantage.” These four areas include eco-efficiency, beyond compliance leadership, eco-branding, and environmental cost leadership. In the analyses of particular airports, I will be focused on these aspects more in detail.

Some travelers have already decided to utilize substitute methods of transportation with an end goal to lessen the expanded fuel-level use in the aviation sector. For some customers,

however, keeping away from air travel is just impossible. In this manner, numerous transporters have made endeavors to diminish their carbon footprints and therefore make their labels more attractive. In this thesis, I will deal with these practices and explain how the self-presentation of two chosen organizations works in sustainability discourse. In addition to all the benefits tourism has, it also has negative effects on the environment. Man's impacts on nature are no longer just local but have also begun to take on global parameters. Experts, in cooperation with volunteers, propose an alternative whose priority is environmental protection. Gradually, therefore, various discussions and theories began to emerge in response to the adverse effects of man on nature. This is the so-called sustainable tourism, which is increasingly becoming part of tourism around the world.

“Nowadays, sustainability is not an option in the tourism industry, but a key tool to ensure competitiveness and the involvement of tourists in the responsible management of destinations.” (Sharma, 2019) Moreover, it is essential to know how to communicate sustainability practices in the tourism sector by being aware of the way of sharing its main objectives. It should be stressed that tourist sustainability must be understood as a continuous process rather than a static state; it must be considered a permanent process of adaptation and balance to adjust their relationship with ecological, economic, and social systems (Pulido-Fernández and López-Sánchez, 2016, p.165). According to Budeanu (2007, p. 499), “the low support from customers is one of the main barriers for progress towards sustainable tourism.” Therefore, it is essential to know the tourist (customer) position and understand how the discourse of sustainability is perceived from the tourists' perspective.

Factors of sustainable tourism

The concept of sustainable tourism includes the dimension of natural, economic, and social capital concerning sustainable development goals. None of these pillars should be preferred in the long term, as prioritizing one pillar will cause the other pillars to lag behind. For example, by prioritizing the economic pillar, there may be an overload of land use, an increase in waste growth, and transport problems. Preferring the environmental pillar could lead to economic stagnation, associated with depopulation and stagnation of regions. The preference for the third-social pillar could jeopardize competitiveness in economic competition between regions. The dimensions of sustainable tourism can be characterized as follows (Fabeiro, 2012): (1) environmental sustainability aimed at conserving resources, especially non-renewable and scarce ones. In order to meet this challenge, it appears necessary to reduce air pollution. Therefore, defining the environmental aspect is important to distinguish between the terms

ecological and environmental. Ecological sustainability is thus defined as meeting needs without compromising the health of ecosystems. According to Morelli (2011), this definition complies with biological protection. The term environmental is associated with human interaction and the ecological system. This is a more precise and reasonable expression of the concept, represents a broader concept of the word ecological, and, in essence, represents the intersection of human activity and ecological systems. In his paper on environmental sustainability, Morelli defined the term as an activity that meets the needs of today and future generations without compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them (Morelli, 2011).

(2) Social and cultural sustainability meaning that the importance of social and cultural sustainability lies in respecting human rights and ensuring equal opportunities for all members of society. This requires a fair distribution of economic benefits in order to alleviate poverty. The social pillar points to the improvement of conditions for people and the development of the whole community. The goal of individuals and society is social well-being, which helps maintain the sustainability of the community as a whole. Social and mutual understanding, trust, own capital, poverty alleviation, etc., are the main priorities of the local community. Social sustainability tends to help reduce the adverse effects of externalities on the community and maintain a healthy environment in the community. This aspect includes human rights, labor rights, and government corporations. (Munasinghe, 2007).

(3) Economic sustainability is based on ensuring the well-being of society and addressing the cost-effectiveness of economic activities. A key aspect is the long-term viability of tourism businesses. An economically sustainable system must therefore be able to produce goods and services on an ongoing basis, maintain a manageable level of indebtedness, and prevent extreme sectoral imbalances that harm agricultural or industrial production (Harris, 2003). In addition, in recent decades, tourism has become one of the largest economic sectors in the world, which is related to its important position in the economy of individual countries. Therefore, the aim of sustainable tourism is to find a balance between economic growth, social progress, and preserving the environment.

Stakeholders in sustainable tourism

For the efficient implementation of sustainable tourism, stakeholders are essential. These are, in particular, government at all levels, private sector, NGOs, multilateral and bilateral

donors, tourists, and local communities. They develop policies for the protection and management of natural areas. Stakeholders within sustainable tourism are dependent on the tourism industry (transport of tourists, their stays). Stakeholders also include local authorities that regulate infrastructure and control protected areas, managers. Other actors are international development agencies that play an essential role in ecotourism development because they fund projects concerning the development of tourism, biodiversity, and the development of micro-enterprises dealing with ecotourism.

Sustainable development of tourism

Tourism is one of the most dynamic emerging sectors of the world economy. The impact of tourism on the development of the area is positive, but unfortunately also negative. Among the most important positive impacts, we can include, for example, technological procedures and techniques - several business entities apply these technological procedures and techniques that are focused on saving energy, reducing emissions, reducing waste using alternative sources, which helps to improve air and water (Sofronov, 2017). In addition, the construction of infrastructure is one of the necessary prerequisites for tourism development. The negative impact is manifested in the following areas: Pollution of water, air, increasing noise levels - these negative consequences occur due to the development of transport but also due to insufficient environmental awareness of entrepreneurs in tourism, but also due to the habits and behavior of participants (Sofronov, 2017).

Sustainable development and environmental improvement are priority issues that affect the world's population and global economic growth. To address these challenges, several concepts have been developed, such as the IUCN (World Conservation Union) Global Strategy for Environmental Protection in 1980, UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), and WWF (World Wildlife Fund) that Amsterdam Schiphol Airport is a part of. This strategy emphasized the interrelationship and interdependence between economic development and environmental protection.

In addition, environmental labeling of products, or eco-labeling, is one of the environmental policy tools. It is a certification system that a third, independent party manages (it is not operated by either the manufacturer or the consumer). The main goal of environmental labeling of products is to support the protection of the environment and prevent its pollution. It also supports the production and consumption of products that are environmentally friendly throughout their life cycle. The purpose of eco-labeling is (Mak&Crane, 2015): reduction of

the negative impact of products on the environment, pressure to develop products to be more environmentally friendly, and the possibility of using the information potential of ecolabelling systems on environmental education of the population.

2030 Agenda Objectives and Tourism

The new Agenda valid until 2030, also known as the 2030 Agenda, is the most comprehensive set of global commitments to achieve sustainable development to date. The 2030 Agenda was adopted by UN member states in 2015 and called on states to work together in a coordinated way to address global challenges. The 2030 Agenda follows on from the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000, which defined the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Goals are eight (who.int, 2019): (1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) to achieve universal primary education, (3) to promote gender equality and empower women, (4) to reduce child mortality, (5) to improve maternal health, (6) ensure environmental sustainability, (8) develop a global partnership for development.

The Millennium Development Goals were met in the period from 2000 to 2015. After the end of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, the initiative was lost, but with some changes. For this reason, the UN has undertaken to define goals, the fulfillment of which should lead to the solution of the most severe problems of today's world. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals represent the transformational power of Agenda 2030. (17goals.org, 2019) Several groups of society participated in preparing the new global goals: politicians, entrepreneurs, academia, and representatives of the non-governmental sector. The word "sustainability" in the title of the goals means that the needs of the people today should be met, so that future generation is not endangered. One of the goals is to ensure a good life for all people in the world without suffering the environment and without deepening the damage to our planet. Climate change is one of the future's biggest challenges. Tourism confirms its essential role in creating prosperity, improving living standards, and protecting the environment. At present, the tourism sector is mentioned in the key UN documents on sustainable development and the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. UN General Assembly declares 2017 the "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development" (unwto.org, 2021). Tourism is directly or indirectly linked to the 17 objectives of the 2030 Agenda. It is directly related to goals such as decent work and economic growth, responsible production and consumption, and partnerships to meet goals. Tourism indirectly affects, for example, the quality of health and life, the quality of education.

Concerning my main two research airports, both are actively contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda goals. According to Fraport's Responsibility section, the United Nations member states are with Agenda 2030 expressing their belief that "global challenges can only be solved collectively." As a signatory to the Global Compact, Frankfurt Airport is firmly committed to these Sustainable Development Goals. However, the primary focus is on the goals that Fraport can actually affect. Moreover, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport focuses on these goals in its Sustainability Roadmap 2030 report. According to the Roadmap (2019), by realizing the 2030 objectives, the Schiphol Airport management wants to improve all stakeholders' quality of life.

For the systematic development of tourism, it is necessary to create suitable organizational presumptions. The business in the tourism market should act as a unit where the production of services is decentralized but presented on the market as a set of services with a common brand. The abbreviation DMO - Destination Management / Marketing Organization is used in tourism terminology. The DMO is a leading organizational body, including various organizations, experts, and other entities interested in tourism development. (unwto.org, p.12) The destination's marketing strategies also depend on tourism development plans. The marketing plan is, therefore, one of the most important documents. At the same time, it serves to implement the ideals set out in the tourism strategy into the active process to attract customers. Fernandez & Sanchez (2016) argue that sustainability and change in attitude to responsibility in tourism development and consumption can be a competitive advantage in destination positioning in tourism markets. Moreover, "it has been acknowledged that it will be rather difficult to make progress in tourism sustainability without direct, clear, and resolute involvement of policy makers in destination management" (Fernandez & Sanchez, 2016, p. 170).

2.3 Theories of marketing

To build up an argument on the discourse of sustainability of the two airports, I will need concepts of marketing, branding, and corporate social responsibility. Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt airport are both active in marketing presentations on their websites and especially on social media. To understand their importance, the brand values, characteristics, and positioning will be explained.

Marketing is crucial in tourism. Like producers and service providers, tourism organizations must adapt their offers to the needs of the market and influence product offers, which cannot be done without business risks. Focusing on the customer and his needs requires an absolute approach to the management of the transformation process, where marketing is one of the basic elements. Marketing communication is a process that mediates information between companies, the market, and the public. This information can be conveyed in various forms, such as slogans, logos, or various interactive means. Thus, marketing communication informs the environment about products or services, explains their utility, quality, or value, and also listens to and accepts the requirements of consumers and responds to them. To create good relationships and positive opinions of the company, it is essential to create a good image and brand. A good image positively affects interest groups, and companies use social and green marketing methods to create a successful image. Also, the next step in building positive relationships with the public is a commitment to behave ethically and responsibly, the so-called social responsibility (Clow, 2004).

Importance of marketing in the aviation industry

Marketing in the aviation industry has suffered from a low degree of competitiveness in the past. Due to the lack of competition in private and public airlines, the conditions for marketing development were minimal compared to nowadays. Therefore, airport promotion was more straightforward, passive, and limited to leaflets, publications, and timetables. On the other hand, the current proactive approach forces the airport to create sophisticated marketing campaigns and use new marketing tools to reach customers and stakeholders. Thus, the liberalization of the aviation segment, new technologies in air transport, and the development of aviation in the world have contributed to the pressure on the competitiveness of national companies, which has led to the privatization of airports (or companies).

Airports are primarily customer-oriented by using their own marketing strategies. The company's priority is attracting customers and meeting their expectations more efficiently and effectively than the competition. This is characterized by the cohesion of the following features: market concentration, coordinated marketing, customer orientation, and profitability. Furthermore, the efforts of airports and airlines are to find the best economic benefits for the entity, which further leads to creating the most effective strategies. In addition, their focus is on improving the economic situation on the market, increasing market share, or achieving the company's pre-determined goals.

Green marketing

Two years ago, the leading Schiphol carrier KLM introduced a campaign „Fly responsibly“. There have been some discussions about this green marketing approach. According to Forbes (forbes.com, 2019), the campaign “smells a bit of greenwashing” since it does not seem to take seriously a potentially effective method of understanding the challenges of aviation pollution. Therefore, companies should be careful with how they brand sustainability and avoid greenwashing. Green marketing is a variety of measures and activities by businesses aimed at raising environmental awareness. Green or ecological marketing can be understood as the orientation of companies to ecological necessities and possibilities related to their social responsibility and the company's activities. There are a lot of definitions of green marketing:

According to Ward, for a company to have a successful sustainable brand, it should complete three basic steps: (1) be original – manage the production ecologically. The production process of the presented green products/services must coincide with this direction. (2) customer education - in addition to informing consumers that there is a green product on the market, it is essential that they know what they can achieve by acting more sustainable. It is important to make consumers to be more environmentally responsible. (3) customer participation – to allow consumers to participate in environmental activities.

In environmental marketing, we distinguish according to LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability) consumers who emphasize the environment, ethics, justice, or personal development and health. A company needs to know its target group or segments in which it wants to carry out its business activities (Kotler & Keller, 2007, p. 158). Thanks to this, they know what green products to offer the given group and can thus set up a successful marketing strategy. Customers would like it to be easier to protect the environment, but they do not have enough environmental knowledge. However, they are willing to learn new things, acting as a strategic opportunity for companies.

Corporate social responsibility and tourism

Corporate social responsibility has influenced the history of green marketing and is closely related to it. A company that applies the principle of social responsibility tries to think about what is good and bad for society. The operation of the company in such a case is based on the principle of triple-bottom-line, which includes (era-environmental.com, 2021): (1) Economic area – effort to achieve economic growth, thanks to compliance with codes of

business conduct of the company, codes of ethics, behavior towards suppliers and investors, and others. (2) Environmental area - this is the company's environmental policy, which takes care of safety and environmental protection and ensures the protection of resources, materials, and energy. (3) Social area - with a view to fair and favorable business conditions, social stability, and human resource development, emphasizing employee and community satisfaction (Elkington, 1997, c.d.).

A company that adopts the concept of corporate social responsibility strives to achieve not only a profit in its business, but it is a comprehensive concept of responsibility, i.e., it also takes into account the social and environmental spheres, in addition to its legal obligations. In the relationship between the company image and corporate social responsibility, we mean the actual image, i.e., how the partners perceive the organization. Therefore, if the company's activities related to corporate social responsibility are to impact the image of the partners, it is necessary to pay intensive attention to communication. Furthermore, when communicating with customers, it is necessary to use the available tools of the marketing mix to influence the consciousness and subconscious of the public.

The basis is intensive and effective communication about corporate social responsibility to the most important target groups. Employees are the most crucial group because their behavior and communication are significantly influenced by the image that customers create about the company. The second important group is the already mentioned customers, to whom it is necessary to provide an adequate amount of information on corporate social responsibility. The third group is the public, from which new customers will come. The success of communication with interest groups is conditioned by a clear idea of the goal, which means that the company must know exactly what image it wants to create. To achieve the goal, it is necessary to create a strategy that outlines how the goal will be achieved. To this must be added sufficient flexibility to enable the company to react quickly to new situations emerging on the market every day and adapt its strategy or even goal to them.

Definition of marketing and branding

"Marketing is becoming part of sustainable development and allows us to meet the needs of people without compromising future generations of consumers. This stage is called the so-called holistic marketing, which has four components "(Kotler & Keller, 2007, pp. 55-61). These four components include relationship marketing, internal marketing, integrated marketing, and socially responsible marketing. Nowadays, marketing is the most modern way

of doing business and thinking, it is about the company knowing the needs and wishes of consumer groups. The company must create and provide value to customers and develop and maintain lasting relationships to benefit. According to the marketing concept, in order to achieve a company, it must provide higher value and satisfaction for customers than the competition. Therefore, the marketing specialist must do something other than just adapt to the customer's needs. It must also gain an advantage by placing its offer firmly in customers' minds compared to the competition's offer (Kotler & Keller, 2007). In the case of the two chosen airports, both are focused on the visitor's needs. For example, people are becoming more aware and well-informed of the current environmental issues. As a result, company marketing presented as sustainable is an excellent way to improve its brand image and, therefore, satisfy customers.

Brand characteristics

The brand reveals a lot about the company's nature, what it really is, where it is advised, what its preferred values are. The brand identifies users or specific customer segments. The purpose of creating a brand is to create a set of deep-rooted ideas about the product so that it is not necessary to repeat or explain these values when saying the brand name. A destination is both a geographical place and a metaphysical space determined by a network of meanings and values attached to it (Campelo et al., 2013). Destination branding should be guided by the theory of place and sense of place to benefit from and contribute to the place's natural, cultural, social, and economic wealth (Hankinson 2007).

Brand value

What distinguishes the best airports in the world is that they have exclusive consumer experiences that cannot be found anywhere else. As a result, airport operators strive to meet the needs and expectations of their customers and, as a result, cultivate a strong airport brand with which passengers become familiar. The brand is an essential asset for marketing. Therefore, the concept of a brand is what the brand adds to the value of the product/aspect. However, there is a difference between the value perceived by customers and the financial value. The perception of brand value is based on both factors. From an economic point of view, the value of a brand is the value of future revenues generated by the brand and its benefits. For marketers, the value of a brand is much more important to customers than its financial value (Wheeler, 2013). Developing a brand strategy can be one of the most challenging steps in the marketing plan process. It is essential to know its identity, as brand identity accompanies the organization. The

more a company informs its audience about activities, the more it raises awareness of its brand. Branding has arguably become one of the most important marketing strategies, functioning as “the glue that holds the broad range of marketing factions together” (Ries & Ries, 1998, p. 2).

Corporate identity and communication as a branding process

Effective communication is essential for creating a corporate identity. If communication within the company is ineffective, it may happen that a positive corporate identity will be destroyed. Communication is the process of building a corporate brand. Therefore, it is essential to know a series of well-coordinated and future activities to highlight services, achievements, and development efforts. The employees of the company must be identified with the values that the company prefers. Values help the company's growth because they are a kind of standard according to which the company and employees are governed. If employees are not identified with these values, it is not possible to talk about corporate identity. Kotler & Keller (2007) claim that so-called internalization is important for the brand, i.e., employees' connection with the brand. The employee must be familiar with the brand, and this occurs when he gains some experience that confirms the marketer's ability to keep his brand promise in practice.

According to Timothy, sustainable tourism has aimed to appeal more to specific interest groups rather than the masses of millions. As a result, new planning paradigms have emerged, and they have also entered the field of marketing. As the public becomes more environmentally conscious, new demand is created for products, experiences, and sustainable places (Timothy, 2011). To properly understand the development and importance of the aviation industry, it is essential to describe specific companies and their marketing tools. Another step in marketing management is the planning itself. Organizations need to understand the marketing mix after developing the marketing plan. There is now a 7-P approach to achieving the best marketing mix (Timothy, 2011). These are product, price, promotion, place, people, packaging, and positioning, and all play an important role in the airports' development.

The purpose of brand communication

Company communication is often a key strategic tool in today's highly competitive and information-driven environment. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate communication messages reasonably and consistently and strengthen a well-managed company's positive image (Wheeler, 2013). The more the company maintains more PR and the advertising campaign maintains its efforts, the better its brand awareness is. The brand is closely associated with a

company's performance and is the path to an effective relationship with the consumer. Therefore, this step can be very beneficial for the image of the tourist destination.

By focusing on the consumer brand, the airport will manage its brand and activity with a different look for the traveler because its performance will be measured differently. Thus, the more meaningful the relationship with the consumer, through the brand of an airport, the better the public image about a tourist destination, for the simple reason that it is one of the main stakeholders in the tourist sector of an island region. In conclusion, this process may facilitate fine-tuning the airport's image with the tourist destination image. In both, the traveler is seen as a consumer of the brand.

3 METHODOLOGY

The key concepts that I will use in my argumentation are as follows: place identity, place branding, sense of place, tourist gaze, and sustainability. In order to understand the branding practices of the two chosen airports in times of climate crisis, this thesis is focused on their operationalization of the discourse on sustainability. Communication, both written and spoken, is crucial in modern societies. The method of textual analysis can take multiple forms, including content analysis, argumentation analysis, and discourse analysis. This latter method will be used in this research because it allows us for a broader scope of textual analysis, exploring power structures by uncovering how connections are linguistically and visually built-in space.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

For the critical discourse analysis, an approach presented by Norman Fairclough will be taken. “A primary focus of CDA is on the effect of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs, and in particular on discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities: on dialectical relations between discourse and power, and their effects on other relations within the social process and their elements” (Fairclough, 2010, p.8). The importance of critical discourse analysis lays in the fact that “CDA has an important role in critical research focused on strategies because strategies have a strongly discursive character: they include imaginaries for change and for new practices and systems, and they include discourses, narratives and arguments which interpret, explain and justify the area of social life they are focused upon – its past, its present, and its possible future” (Fairclough, 2010). The analysis provides a holistic look at responsible and sustainable tourism issues in order to help recognize the socio-cultural trends influencing transformation in the tourism system. The thesis offers an interpretation of Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA, that includes a complex of elements such as: text analysis, discursive practice analysis (text production, distribution, and consumption), and sociocultural practice analysis. It is not analysis of discourse “in itself” as one might take it to be, but analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the “internal relations” of discourse (Fairclough, 2010).

Although Fairclough understands discourse as a form of social practice, or as a three-dimensional concept, the discourse is probably most comprehensively characterized by another important representative of critical discourse analysis - A. van Dijk, who defines discourse as a multidimensional social phenomenon, an object (meaningful sequences of words and

sentences), an action, a form of social interaction, social practice, mental representation, an interactive or communicative phenomenon, a cultural product, or even an economic community that can be sold or bought (van Dijk, 2009).

The already mentioned approach, which combines these elements, is Fairclough's three-dimensional conception of discourse. The author outlines the inclusive relationship of text, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 2010) and, on this basis, differentiates three levels of discourse study. In the first, narrowest, textual dimension, the author considers a (primarily formal) text description. Thus, he means a linguistic examination of the lexical stock, grammatical rules, cohesion, and text structure. In the second dimension of discursive practice, involving the production, distribution, and consumption of texts, attention is focused on the power of utterances, textual coherence, and intertextuality. Finally, the third dimension of social practice is intended to uncover ideologies and means of ensuring hegemony.

The critical analysis follows a different and critical approach to problems. It seeks to create explicit power relations that are often hidden and thus derive results that are perceived as practical relevance. Accordingly, the CDA refers to such extralinguistic factors as culture, society, and ideology. In any case, the term context is a key term, as it explicitly includes socio-psychological, political, and ideological components and thus requires an interdisciplinary approach.

According to Titscher (2000), the general principles of critical discourse analysis can be summarized as follows: (1) it deals with the linguistic nature of social and cultural processes and structures; (2) it examines power in discourse and power over discourse; (3) each individual use of language reproduces or transforms society and culture, including relations of power; (4) it indicates the possibility of a systematic methodology and the relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations; (5) it is understood as a social science discipline that clearly expresses its interests and favors the application of its discoveries to practical issues.

Socio-cultural approach

Taking the socio-cultural approach, which is essential in this analysis of the two airports, critical discourse analysis examines language in the range of social relations between ideologies and power, and it is important to realize the vital role that language plays in society and how it contributes to social change (Fairclough, 2012, p. 452). According to Fairclough, each text has an ideal function through the representation of experience and the representation of the world.

In addition, the texts capture the social interactions between the participants in the discourse and therefore show an interpersonal function. Therefore, it can be said that it also considers the possibilities of development and improvement.

3.2 Interviews

In order to get a multi-perspective overview, the interviews in this thesis are semi-structured, which means that the interviewers were asked a series of open-ended questions, which were determined before the interview. I have chosen this type of qualitative research because open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to express themselves spontaneously in their own words, providing me with deeper insights. Semi-structured interviews were also preferred so the questions could be written and thought about ahead of time.

To conduct a good and quality interview, it is essential to be familiar with the interview techniques. The interview process should be open with a focus on how the interviewer understands the situation. Furthermore, it is important in a semi-structured interview to follow the already mentioned script with the questions that will be asked (Bryman and Bell, 2015). When conducting an interview, it is better to start with the easy questions and work towards the more difficult ones. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), as there is more consistency, it is more likely to be followed when the researchers are aware and understand how the data will be interpreted.

Moreover, it is essential to keep the interview focused on the particular subject relevant to the topic. By adhering to this, the interviewer will keep the interview limited to gain more straightforward and precise answers from the respondent. Lastly, it should be noted that in the case of interviewing more than one person/company, questions for both of them should not differ to a large extent in order to be able to compare their answers in the end.

3.3 Data collection

Data that will be used are initially produced by the management of Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt airports. The data offer insights into the activities and strategies all the particular parts of those companies represent. The material used for analysis can be found on their official websites that feature annual reports and reports about sustainability and social media such as

Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. In addition, I am going to analyze the sustainable branding materials that are physically present at the airports in the form of stickers, slogans, or other visual representations.

Nowadays, the pandemic situation makes it difficult to approach people in person. Still, I did my best to set up a call with the responsible branding managers of Schiphol and Frankfurt airports. I decided to contact people in charge of the sustainable development of the airports since they know best how the processes within the company work. Therefore, data will be collected via means of an interview. The interview will be with the responsible people from Frankfurt and Schiphol airports and will be semi-structured.

Additionally, the interviews are going to be recorded in order to create a transcript. The goal of the interviews is to gain insights into the practices of sustainability within Schiphol and Frankfurt and how the airports present themselves to their customers. The data in the transcript will be coded, and the codes will be put into themes. Finally, the themes will be analyzed and refined to produce a report with the findings from the interviews.

3.4 Data analysis

Before having the chosen data analyzed, I had decided on primary goals and gained a fundamental understanding of the topic I am dealing with. The theoretical pillars had been discussed, and the relationship between climate change and its effects on the aviation industry had been evaluated, resulting in the sustainable presentation of the airports. The primary sources that will be analyzed are branding materials used and presented on various social media. The official websites that will be examined are Schiphol Airport and Fraport websites that communicate the official sustainability branding practices created by the management of the airports. In addition, I have visited Frankfurt and Schiphol airports, where I took pictures of the branding material representing sustainability which is placed physically at the terminals. These pictures will be analyzed from the perspective of concepts that I mentioned above in the thesis. In this case, these include mainly a sense of place, tourist gaze, and factors of sustainability and branding. In my analysis, I will try to follow Fairclough's concepts of critical discourse analysis mainly. As mentioned above, they include textual analysis, discursive practice, and what is the ideology of the texts. A fundamental point about the ideology is what aspects or levels of vocabulary and expression can be politically invested. One frequent point is that 'meanings' (sometimes defined as 'content' as opposed to 'form') are ideological (e.g., Thompson 1984)

and that this sometimes implies just or primarily lexical meanings. Of course, lexical meanings are essential, but so are presuppositions, meanings, metaphors, and consistency, all of which are elements of interpretation. Coherence is a significant aspect in the ideological structure and reorganization of topics of discourse: a text postulates a topic that is capable of automatically connecting together its theoretically extraordinarily varied and not directly connected components to make sense of it. A text leads to the formation of such a topic by postulating it.

3.5 Indication of structure

The analysis of Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports' sustainable representation consists of three parts. First, for each airport, I chose three slogans to be analyzed. Then, the visual representations follow, including advertisements posted on the airports' official social media accounts. Finally, I studied pictures that were taken physically at the airports. An additional part of the analysis also includes interviews with the professionals responsible for the management of sustainable development of Amsterdam Schiphol and Fraport.

4 ANALYSIS

The first step of the analysis is to provide a summary of the structure to explain how the primary sources are going to be interpreted. Next, this process will describe the key material, including branding visuals and texts.

Since branding discourse is intended rather to persuade than inform (Wang, 2000), special attention is given to how the various representations of Amsterdam and Frankfurt airports are built by advertisement and why such interpretations were implemented to specific market segments. According to Pritchard & Morgan (1998), marketers construct associations by marketing images that portray particular ways of seeing reality and strengthening and representing these social relationships. After understanding the framework of the branding materials, I will now address the second component of Fairclough's theory as described in the literature review. The second dimension serves as a point of contact between the texts and the reader. On the one hand, the author is undoubtedly inspired by previous texts while composing the text, which he/she develops syntactically or semantically. Technically, this process is known as 'intertextuality,' which means that authors may incorporate an expression or word from another author's text into their own. The goal of intertextuality is a multifaceted activity whose goal is sometimes to critique, sometimes to draw the viewer or reader's interests, and sometimes to inspire them, depending on the previous texts on which the author's text is centered. According to Fairclough, the third level of critical discourse analysis deals on a far greater level by coping with the unseen and implicit ideologies implied in their language usage. The branding content is not created at random but rather with a precise aim in mind. They are designed to educate and reassure the reader/viewer, remind the audience of the critics' weaknesses and disadvantages, or increase the legitimacy of what is going on.

Analysis of texts includes interdiscursive analysis of which genres, discourses, and styles are drawn upon and oriented to in a particular text and how they are articulated together in the text, then linguistic analysis of actional, symbolic and identifying meanings (Fairclough, 2010). Texts also connect events, including events that are removed from each other in time and space. Hence, I will combine materials from various accessible data, including visual and textual representations. The result is that the sense of place and space would actually become an actual participant observation. During my visit and exploration of the signs at the two airports, significant importance played in the placement of the branding materials and their location in real space. Therefore, it is essential to reflect on where the branding material is put, where the

people are moving the most, and the chances people see the advertisements. Airports are designed with the movement of people in mind, and they know how many people will move in what direction. That is why the placement of advertisements is chosen very carefully.

As the primary visual attribute viewed by almost all people, color represents the essence of the world we live in and our emotions and opinions. Since sustainability is represented by green color, it is essential to depict it in the visuals of the airports. Schiphol's corporate brand makes it easy to recognize that they use colorful visualizations as background colors of the texts. Green is typically linked with nature and optimism, and it often occurs in the environmental area. Both Schiphol and Frankfurt airports employ this color to communicate a picture of environmental responsibility. Perceiving the pictures could create a hypothetical close connection with the audience by the tourist gaze.

4.1 Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

Critical discourse analysis of Amsterdam Schiphol branding materials

For this section, there is a selection of branding materials from the wide variety of data taken from the official accounts of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and pictures taken by me physically at the airport. My primary goal is first to examine the airport's website sustainable advertising in-depth and then be focused on social media sustainability presentation. By analyzing various social media accounts of the airport, I aim to examine how they brand sustainability to their followers on Twitter. The chosen representations were chosen based on the relevance of my case study and recent posting date.

First, I will analyze three written slogans that present sustainability at the official website of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. The main focus will be on where they are placed and what are they supposed to represent in the first place. The texts were created by the management of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, responsible for the marketing department. They reveal the ideas of how they regard and aim to present the airport as environmentally friendly.

1. "Moving towards sustainable aviation."

As Fairclough (2010) explained in his theories on critical discourse analysis, I will look at the text through investigating connections in specific discourse events. Concerning the textual analysis, the slogan is the first thing seen by the viewer when visiting the "Sustainable future"

section at the airport's official website. The name of the section already suggests the commitment that they present. The words of the slogan are written in the white color placed on the background representing the picture of the outside area of the airport. The verb “moving” suggests the dynamic process, and the whole phrasal verb “move towards” is a valuable way to symbolize change and progress. Overall, the sentence also employs positive language. The most important point they are making in this slogan is precisely what their identity says, to be more sustainable towards the environment and make aviation environmentally friendly. Kotler & Keller (2007, p. 268) interpret a brand as "a name, term, symbol, design or combination of these, that identifies the maker or seller of the product or service." It is part of marketing that positions the brand as trustworthy and distinctive. Evaluating the slogan itself, I consider it memorable, communicating the key point that they are making; however, one might say that the slogan is not original. The reason is that when I wrote the slogan to Google, there were a lot more searches besides the official one from Schiphol Airport. That means that the slogan is used by various companies and not only by Schiphol.

2. “Sustaining Your World”

Sustaining Your World is the vision and strategy to achieve Vision 2050. The company has been using this slogan effectively since 'Sustaining your world' is not only used as a motto for the airport's communication, but it also acts as the brand's basis. This ensures that all engagement or promotional strategies related to the tourism brand should fit with the slogan. The choice of the words, especially the possessive determiner “your,” creates a sense that it is our world, but each of us is responsible for making it sustainable. Therefore, this makes us active participants in the process of sustainability and positively interacts with the audience. According to Cruz et al. (2017, p. 105), using pronouns enhances customer involvement and overall brand attitude. The reason why is that it directly speaks to the audience. When customers are engaged with the brand message, they are more inclined to spread awareness about the message and its content by, for example, sharing it on other social media channels. In addition, when the marketers promote material on social media, it is essential to aim and think about all the target groups rather than a single customer. Therefore, using the pronoun “you” may be a good option for engaging with everybody who reads it (Cruz et al., 2017, p. 106).

3. “Smart and Sustainable”

Taking the discourse practice perspective according to Fairclough, the message “Smart and Sustainable” has been introduced by Schiphol Airport as an action plan that presents “a bright

future for air transport through 2030, with onward projections to 2050, offering an appealing and collective route to achieving these objectives” (Schiphol report, 2018). However, this action plan represents an actual project and Schiphol’s performance and identity towards being environmentally friendly. The extensive (and exclusive) use of adjectives makes the slogan more vibrant and engaging to read, revealing that this message is an advertising product. The slogan employs a short expression rather than a sentence to ensure that it is quickly read and remembered. The word “smart” might refer to the provision of information to travelers. However, in the marketing and business field, SMART is an acronym that, according to branding theories, stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (Kotler & Keller, 2007, p. 515).

Overall, we can see that expressions “Moving towards sustainable aviation” and “Sustaining Your World” do not use imperative but instead informing language by using the continuous tense. Therefore, they do not directly address the reader. Instead, they notify and update what has been happening and the characteristics of the airport’s eco-friendly practices. The progressive tense in marketing might, to some people, enhance a sense of commitment and trust. Fomukong (2017, p. 2) argues in his paper that the advertising language effectively works in defining why and where the statements are by utilizing the verb participles that describe or modify nouns rather than use direct adjectives. Additionally, Ryan (2019), in her online article Slogans and Taglines also highlighted, that it is essential to take a descriptive approach to build a strong slogan that expresses precisely what the company does. Schiphol uses excellent examples of “moving” and “sustaining” in their taglines. Therefore, it can be said that starting a slogan with a present participle (ending with -ing) is a conventional method to give a brand a trustworthy and authoritative voice.

Analysis of visual representations

Before looking at the actual recent branding materials, I checked Amsterdam Schiphol Airport's way to sustainability from the beginnings of their environmental presentation. For example, on November 11, 2011, *de landelijke Dag van de Duurzaamheid* (the Sustainability Day) in the Netherlands, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport launched the 'Check-in to Sustainability' campaign that was one of the first official campaigns related to sustainability. The main idea was to create a campaign to introduce Schiphol's sustainable activities to visitors and the airport’s employees. They made a video, logo, website, labels, prints, wall posters, media banners, and animation films (Brandingabetterworld.com, 2021).



Figure 1 'Check-in to Sustainability' campaign (Brandingabetterworld.com)

In the scope of the campaign Check-in to sustainability, three slogans are going to be analyzed. As Fairclough (2010, p.3) explains, "discourse is not simply an entity we can define independently: we can only arrive at an understanding of it by analyzing sets of relations." However dialectical, the relations are dialectical, meaning that no single object or aspect can be analyzed apart from its dialectical relationships with others. Hence, by looking at the chosen branding material of the airport, the dialectical relationship implies that the brands presented by the official sources should not be seen as entirely separate units from one another because they exist in relation. In the first place, the material interpretation involves how the text's creators viewed the brand's specifications. The slogans use plain language and simple form to make it easier to understand the actual message. Long sentences do not attract passengers and can make them feel bored very quickly, so shorter phrases are used to communicate the message instead of longer sentences better. On the other hand, there are also smaller text places on the two stickers, which explains the meaning of the sustainable process more in detail.

The choice of the words feed and hungry is a good way to create a captivating feeling. Mention of feeding or food can easily capture the attention of the target audience. The pink color as a background of the two slogans implies kindness, happiness, and good health. On the other hand, the blue color represents freedom, but also trust. Regarding the typography of the slogans, one might say that bold letters are used to highlight the message even more.

On the other hand, the descriptive text below is smaller, more extended and consists of lowercase letters. Furthermore, the slogan "It's ok to use me, I will be back soon" appeared at Schiphol's toilets, implying that the used paper is recyclable. The placement of the advertisement must have also been thought out because companies know what the best place is

where customers can see them. As we have seen with Wheeler (2013, p. 13) in her branding theories, brand success is directly influenced by promoting place values and presenting them at the right place.

The sentence uses the pronoun “I”, presenting a paper that talks to people, making the statement more personal and connecting with the viewers in a friendly way. People are more likely to take the advice from a friend, and consequently, a slogan that seems to talk to customers as a friend makes them behave accordingly. The creators of the phrase “Trust me” try to convince the reader to trust that the company is 100% fair. However, the word *trust* may be a sensitive word, and therefore it is essential to use it carefully. Concluded, the combination of the visual design and the written message is engaging together with the colors and style of the campaign.

Moreover, in 2015 Schiphol introduced a YouTube video showing sustainable practices at the airport. It is mentioned there that Schiphol wants to become the most sustainable airport in the world. But how this ambition can be achieved? In the video, they say that each year the airport management continues to reduce CO2 emissions, use electric vehicles at the airport, LED lightning whenever possible, working with KLM and other companies to pioneer flights powered by biofuel, separating and recycling waste at the airport and using sustainable baggage conveyor belts that are 99% recyclable. They end the video with the statement: “We are on the right track to becoming the most sustainable airport.” Nowadays, on the official website, we can find a slogan saying, “Schiphol as the world’s most sustainable and high-quality airport”. However, if we read the smaller text under this bold statement, there is said that it is their main ambition, rather than a fact. It is known that brand image affects the company performance more positively if it has a higher brand value through qualified marketing efforts. This is because the image of the company is strong and unique. Thus, there is a place to think about the sustainable slogan, differentiating from the other airports’ presentation and avoiding any stereotypical views. Overall, Schiphol Airport is active on its social media and keeps travelers updated. Presentation of sustainable tourism has become a trend among companies, and they come up with various visual representations and ideas on how to present it the best to the customer.

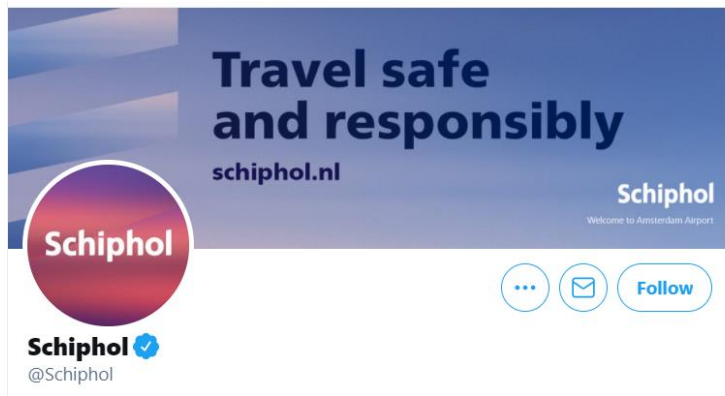


Figure 2 Schiphol Twitter background picture (Twitter)

The first thing that visitors of the airport's account see is not a background picture but rather a slogan that Schiphol Airport stands for. On the one hand, they encourage travelers to travel safely and responsibly. On the other hand, it shows its promise and claims that the company will ensure that people will be safe eco-friendly if traveling with Schiphol. The creators of this slogan used simple words with a deep meaning. In this case, it is a mini advertisement concisely of what the airport is doing for their passengers. The words „safe” and “responsibly” work as adverbs that explain the way the airport is behaving. Safe travel stands for the current pandemic situation. The airport has a set of measurements to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Responsible travel means traveling in a sustainable manner that is beneficial to the country we are visiting.

From the visual point of view, there are colors of blue, purple, and pink. As Wheeler (2013, p. 24) explains in her branding theories, color is an important aspect that evokes a brand association and expresses differentiation from other brands. The color purple, which is used a lot in the visual representations of Schiphol, represents luxury, power, ambition, and royalty. Therefore, the color might also refer to KLM, Royal Dutch Airlines, a “baby” and the leading representative of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. When developing relationships within the tourism sector with the travelers, one might say that the blue background brings a certain sense of tranquility and security, which is mainly in branding rather essential to impress the audience and give them a feeling of trust and positive energy.

The other background around the name Schiphol is slightly pink, which is also a soothing color that positively affects the audience. In addition, it has been researched (Khattak, 2018, p. 183) that the sense of sight plays a fundamental role in perceiving and understanding the world. Therefore, colors are the crucial features when it comes to our perception of

differentiating brands in marketing. Furthermore, Khattak (2018, p. 185) argues that specific types of personalities are motivated by the selection of colors. This phenomenon also applies to cultures and identities. The primary big background color of the image is blue, and Khattak's research on Color Psychology in Marketing (2018, p. 185) says that blue is acceptable in nearly all world cultures.



Figure 3 Schiphol branding for electric flying (Twitter)

The image that is going to be analyzed has been posted on Schiphol's Twitter account. The picture depicts an electric plane that is claimed to be the future of aviation (greenbiz.com, 2021). In the first place, the post references the article about how airports in the Netherlands are planning to start with electric flying. The article has been published on April 8, 2021, on the official Schiphol website under the Newsroom section. Roel Hellemons, the CEO of Eindhoven Airport, argues that they want to begin with the Netherlands in a regulated environment. They can acquire knowledge and later use the expertise in the further expansion of electric flying in Europe.

Looking at the visual representation, the plane's direction is from left to right, aiming at the green area, representing sustainability and a better future. The importance of this direction lies in the fact that our culture and our minds are trained to perceive the movement from left to

right. It is the general way of writing in western countries, and therefore it underpins the narrative of progress and how our brains naturally process the moving images.

The clouds can be perceived as producers of rain that is beneficial to the world we live in. The plane is flying towards an expression “Power Up”, which according to the idiom dictionary (idioms.thefreedictionary.com, 2015) means *activating some device and preparing it for operation*. Even though there can be found many definitions of this expression, they all lead to beginning to function. The fact that there are no other objects besides the plane on the image may represent that the importance of flying towards a sustainable future is a number one priority. In addition, by applying the concepts of marketing, the company and the brand creators of this advertising understand the purpose of brand communication since it has the attributes of a good brand. This includes its visual representation, short and accurate slogan, company value, and commitment in the tourism industry towards a better future.

Pictures taken at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

To enrich my research and examine the real, sustainable branding physically at the airport, I managed to visit Amsterdam Schiphol Airport in May 2021. Surprisingly, first, it was somewhat challenging to find an advertisement or object referring to environmentally-friendly. There is one big advertisement in front of the airport (see below). However, at the main entrance, visitors cannot find anything that corresponds with the responsible identity of the airport, which is being presented on their website and social media. Further on, when walking to the shopping area and departure halls, the promotion of sustainability is more visible. Unfortunately, one of the limitations of my research is that I could not go behind the security checks where the gates are. So, it is not possible to determine to what extent can passengers see the sustainable advertisements there.



Figure 4 Wildlife trafficking advertisement at Schiphol Airport (own source)

As part of the company's good image and marketing strategies, I referred to Clow's theory of social responsibility (2004) in the theoretical framework in this section. As he explains, a company needs to know what is good and bad for society and that social responsibility means behaving ethically and responsibly. For example, within the Sustainable passenger journey plan of Schiphol Airport, they show the initiative of fighting against wildlife trafficking and run these awareness campaigns at the airport on various displays. On the airport's official website, they also say that Schiphol is a member of Airport Council International's Wildlife Trafficking Task Force. Their goal is to strengthen networks to fight wildlife trafficking and prevent it in the future. Also, this advertisement shows the stereotypical image of Africa as a wild and exotic place.

The advertisement has been shown in the hall that leads to the departure terminal. They are placed on big displays in the top part of the walls when passing the hall on the right side. Therefore, it can be seen mainly by passengers who are flying from Amsterdam. As Fitzpatrick (2015, p. 8) explains in her theory of sense of place, developing a place's culture raises its attractiveness and awareness. Showing this culture to as many people as possible will also emotionally allow interacting with the place. However, because of the limitations of visiting

only the main terminal and halls that lead to departure terminals (before security checks), I cannot say if these advertisements are also shown elsewhere at the airport.

The presented picture is bright green, which immediately gives a positive sense of the advertisement. However, the letters are white, so it can be more difficult to notice the text on the top and bottom of the screen. On the contrary, all the letters are capital and big, except the text that says, “learn more at”, since it does not say the most important message, but instead informs of where to find another information. At the bottom of the screen, there is a reference to the website of the African parks in the sustainable tourism industry with all the need-to-know information. In addition, based on imbalance among the visual and written representation, it is clear that the creator of this advertisement considered promoting the African wildlife foremost visually. Therefore, people are first attracted by the image rather than what is written there.

Within the scope of the textual analysis, there is one slogan that says, “Saving Africa’s wildlife and wild places”. Using the continuous tense, the author suggests that Schiphol has already made some progress and that the company is active in this campaign. The verb “saving” is also used to persuade and influence tourists since the word itself has an emotional effect. It might have an even larger impact on peoples’ sentiments by mentioning that it is about saving animals. As Fairclough (2010, p. 94) also argues, the texts capture the social interactions between the participants in the discourse and thus demonstrate an interpersonal function.



Figure 5 LED lighting at Schiphol Airport (own source)

Within the goals and ambitions of the Schiphol Group, one of them is to provide tourists with also edutainment experiences. Design lighting features lead travelers along the shopping

area in the same manner as a row of lights shows the runway. Orientation on Plaza is greatly improved because of this. The lighting elements are large oval and transparent disks with a diameter of 3.60 m that hang over people's heads. Moreover, the LED lighting provides for color changes based on seasonal events. (expopaviliongroup.com, 2020) As we have seen with Urry (2013), by adding this kind of experience to the airport, a form of tourist gaze is elicited by the special effects, such as the change of color and the design itself. In addition, Urry (2013, p. 15) confirms that a part of a pleasurable experience is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes that are out of the ordinary. According to the Schiphol Sustainability Strategy report (2020), „Schiphol Group wants to create a sustainable passenger journey, inspired by the need to think and take action together.” As part of this approach, they aim to create a sense of place at the airport so that their customers feel welcome and inspired.

During my visit in May, all the LED lights were a purple color and the advertisement with the slogan under the lighting. As mentioned above, where I analyzed Schiphol's Twitter account logo, the purple color refers to power and royalty that can also be associated with the name and identity of their dominant carrier KLM, Royal Dutch Airlines. Technically, this advertisement has no explicit mention of sustainability or environmental friendliness. However, the discourse is instead interpreted by the LED light itself. The slogan “Light up! The sky is yours” seems to be presented as a fact, not an opinion.

The authors used the imperative form on the phrasal verb “light up” to impact the memorability of the slogan—also, the verb associates with positive connotations, such as bright, shining, and visible. Therefore, the linguistic meaning of the slogan *Light up* strengthens the impression of the whole object. In addition, the slogan addresses the visitors by using the possessive pronoun “yours”, and thus it is more personal and interactive.

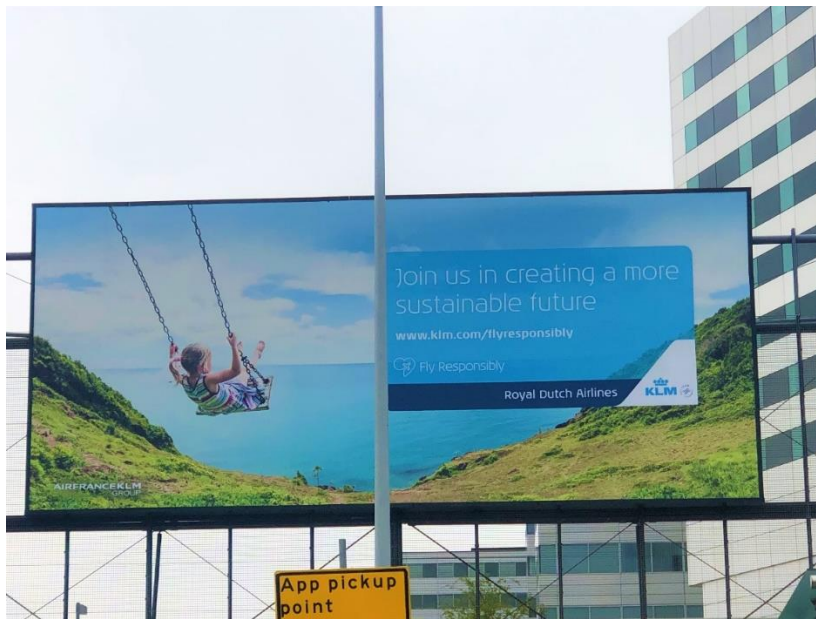


Figure 6 Sustainable advertisement KLM at Schiphol Airport (own source)

As I mentioned in the analysis of the picture above, KLM contributes to forming the overall identity of Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. The slogan depicted in the advertisement is part of the campaign Fly responsibly, which was introduced in 2019 by Royal Dutch Airlines. Together with the campaign, a commercial was released to introduce the whole campaign. The video highlights KLM's 100th anniversary and encourages people to "fly more responsibly" and, somewhat unexpectedly, tells them to consider options such as taking the train instead of flying. However, the question is if KLM is really willing to lose its profits since they promote the alternative of taking the train, or if this campaign is only a form of greenwashing. On the other hand, the slogan on the advertisement is encouraging travelers to join them in creating a more sustainable future, by which they are addressing them in a friendly way to cooperate. According to marketing theories (Wheeler, 2013; Kotler & Keller, 2007), the advertisement is one of the brand features, which along with the slogan, layout, style, and design, create the overall brand's unity. Therefore, it is essential to notice if the advertising is coherent enough in order to have a positive impact on the audience.

Considering the visual representation, a small girl is on a swing looking at the world in the distance towards a better future. Thus, the advertisement reveals that by being more sustainable, we are allowing the next generations to see the beauties of the world. In addition, there is a never-ending sea and the sky. Exactly this depiction of the world is the polar opposite of the physical background of the modernist buildings. According to Urry (2011, p. 175),

„commercial photographs are normally composed to make the viewer dream into the picture, which awaits the viewer’s desires and pleasures in order to be completed.”

A typical example is a beach with the sea or nature, representing the desires of tourists. Moreover, through travelling responsibly, this kind of escapism is framed as a responsible act. There are many shades of blue color associated with trust, intelligence, and leadership on the image. The creators of the campaign even used the blue color as a second background for the slogan. The coloring not only refers to associations I mentioned, but simply to the color of the whole campaign *Fly responsibly*, and to the color of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, which is also light blue. However, the primary carrier of Schiphol Airport is still not the only one that stands out in the blue color. That also includes the flight attendants in their eye-catching uniforms of the same color. Moreover, in combination with the white text, the blue color stands out even more. As Kotler & Keller (2007, p. 347) mentioned in their marketing theories, companies reflect on the color they choose on their corporate identity, which in this case represents balance, trust, and good communication.

The placement of the advertisement has been thought out with the people in mind and the strong awareness of how it is going to be perceived by the viewers. The poster is hung above the building in front of the airport behind the bus station and taxi pick-up points and is big enough to notice from the airport entrance. Furthermore, the advertisement stands right in the middle of the area so every passenger waiting for a bus or taxi can see it very well. Overall, the advertisement seems to be adapted both for a local and foreign audience. Even though its colors and logos present the culture of the Dutch KLM’s identity, the authors used the English language, and the main principle and aim behind the advertisement are to save our world.

4.2 Frankfurt Airport

Critical Discourse Analysis of Frankfurt Airport branding materials

First, when visiting the official website of Fraport, there is a large-sized image presented on the environmental homepage. The picture presents a landscape with a lot of green. The website's design seems to be clear, and the content and central areas are divided into specific blocks. However, the website does not place a high value on visually appealing, colorful graphics features. It should be remarked that the website does include people, which means that

they want to keep a relationship with the travelers, willing to interact with them and that people are the main participants in the promoted activities.

Slogans:

1. “Sustainable action means taking responsibility for shaping the future.”

This slogan is placed under the Responsibility section on the official website of Fraport. The headline has a purple background. As mentioned before, the purple color is the royal color associated with power and nobility, which reveals that Fraport wants to be powerful when it comes to sustainable presentation. It suggests to the website visitor that there is also an influential and noble culture to be found. The creators of this slogan are explaining what “sustainable action” means for the airport. As Fernandez & Sanchez (2016, p. 3) explained, tourist sustainability and its actions must be understood as continuous processes rather than static states. Using the continuous or progressive tenses in the slogans addresses the ongoing process of action and makes the reader believe it more easily. Furthermore, the slogan contains powerful words such as action, responsibility, or future, proving that the slogan creators intend to get the audience interested.

2. “Responsible corporate governance and ethical actions are top priorities for us.”

I chose this message because it represents the sustainable values of the company. The author is Dr Stefan Schulte, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Fraport. The slogan is presented under the Responsibility section on the airport's official website. He is talking about “responsible corporate governance” that based on theories of management and sustainability by Aluchna & Idowu (2017, p. 2), means being “empirical in nature and required to address currently emerging tasks which relate both to efficiently implement classic structural and procedural guidelines and responsibility values as well to incorporate social and environmental objectives into the process of assessing corporate performance.” Overall, that is how the authors project an impression of sustainable practices at the airport and, most importantly, share their principles with the outside community. Finally, the collocation “top priorities” proves that the author intends to persuade the audience that they take their commitments seriously and that the responsible governance and behavior comes before anything else.

3. “Our company strategy, directed at sustainable value growth, is supported by extensive, transparent communication with all market participants, in real-time.”

This message can be found on the official website of Fraport, under the section “Investors”. However, the whole sentence is rather long, highlighting all the critical aspects that were aimed to be introduced. Concerning the textual analysis, the personal pronoun “our” used at the beginning of the sentence has, in this case, a relatively particular meaning. As follows, it refers to the company strategy. However, the pronoun is also most likely used to lower the hierarchy between the authors of the text and the audience to boost positive sentiments towards the message. The terms “extensive” and “transparent” that are introduced as the characteristics of their communication emphasize the company's values. “Market participants” is undoubtedly a marketing term. In marketing theories, I referred to Kotler & Keller (2007, p. 188) - they characterize these participants as a person or a company, including stakeholders, policyholders, employees, and buyers and sellers. In this case, the market participants of the Frankfurt Airport also include the passengers. Finally, the “in real-time” phrase plays an important role because the tourism and aviation industry has been evolving every day, saying that the company is working on the sustainable development of these industries simultaneously, which means that they are committed to their strategy and mission.

Analysis of visual representations



Figure 7 Germany Climate Masterplan (Twitter)

First, the largest written text on the picture says *Klimaschutz im Luftverkehr*, translated as “Climate protection in air traffic.” Furthermore, summarized information is generally placed

at the top of the image, whereas more detailed information is typically placed below it. However, I think there is a particular preference for the English language in the companies' branding that welcome a huge number of international passengers. This image has been posted on the Twitter account of the Frankfurt Airport, which non-German-speaking people also follow. Therefore, writing such an important post about a plan concerning aviation climate protection should have been done in the current world's *lingua franca* – English.

By focusing on the use of colors, the blue shape and the sky are associated with trust and confidence. According to several studies, the blue color has been used the most among the marketing brands. There have been reasons for this, such as the fact that blue has been tested as the color of communication, trust, and intelligence. (smallbiztrends.com) The white color acts as the primary contrast to the blue color in the background. Overall, the style and color scheme of the text and the background seems to be very consistent. On the other hand, the green trees represent not only nature and calmness, but also the environmental safety that is very important when presenting sustainability. However, in the marketing theories, Wheeler (2013, p. 24) explains that colors can be very subjective. They create emotions, trigger a memory, and affect our perception of the brand. Therefore, the choice of colors in sustainable advertisements should be carefully thought out.

When looking at the image, the trees form sort of an open gate. The positioning of the airplane shows that it is entering the sustainable “green zone”, where the viewers' attention is directed. The airplane is flying from left to right, following the delta shape taking the direction towards the green area. The sharp angles play an important role because they point towards what is there to be seen, and in terms of Frankfurt, it is a clear example of the visual tricks of advertising. People see airports in such a progressive way, and they see the airport taking the sustainable issue seriously because of the power of the image that the company is presenting.



Figure 8 Frankfurt Airport branding environmental performance (Twitter)

This picture is also posted on the official Twitter of Frankfurt Airport. Compared to the picture above, it shows the opposite, since there is no direction, only the open sky, part of the building, trees, and flags. The social practice behind this image signifies receiving the Eco-Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS) validation. EMAS is one of the airport's stakeholders and enables the company to enhance its environmental performance continuously. Therefore, the image informs the audience that Frankfurt Airport is doing well in these regards as well as it presents an important partner.

The whole picture acts very clean, calming, and positive. The blue color is the most dominant, nevertheless, despite being on the same color spectrum, there are a few noticeable variations among these shades of blue on the image. The blue color on the left side of the picture is brighter and less saturated than the blue color on the right side. This indicates that the modality on the left is lower than the one on the right, where the flags are. The reason can be that while on the left we can only see a part of the building and a tree, on the right there is the object that is important and that prevails the other objects on the picture. The word "modality" comes from linguistics and according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, p.88), it refers to the authenticity of statements about the world. Therefore, the intensity of colors is a marker of modality, meaning that the lower the intensity is, the lower the modality. Other objects on the picture are flags that usually represent unity, peace, and power. They can also serve as a symbol of pride in either countries or organizations. The airport shows waving flags of EMAS meaning unity and good cooperation with the company in the picture. The number of flags also has a meaning. Behind the visuality and power of this image, there is also a kind of branding and

selling technique. Therefore, the creators of this brand image might have thought about using three flags instead of two or four. Since we were kids, it seems that everything has been somehow centered around the number three. Either it has been A, B, C, or fairytales such as Three Musketeers, Three Little Pigs, or Three Wise Men. Number three is rather an interesting one since it is the smallest number that is needed to construct a pattern and people's brain just seems to perceive and remember number three very easily. That is why companies design things that ordinary people do not think about. The visual branding should work at the unconscious level, and it should leave people with optimism and with a sense of effect.

Finally, in the modern era, hashtags on social media play an essential role. By using a hashtag, the company can help to reach its target audience and enhance brand communication. In this post, the hashtag saying *ecoflagship* is used. Nowadays, it is a big trend to put the label “eco” in the sustainable presentation of either products or services. In this case, the term signifies the airport's environmental performance. According to Cambridge Dictionary, in business English, the term *flagship* is meant as “a company that is one of the most important in a particular area or industry.” By that, the company is trying to let people know that the partnership and mutual support is a principal key to a better future.



Figure 9 Frankfurt Airport branding photovoltaic system (Twitter)

This post has been recently published on the official Twitter account of Frankfurt Airport. Despite the coronavirus outbreak, the airport meets its climate protection targets and

posts some social media activities. In the future, Fraport intends to generate a large part of the energy used at Frankfurt Airport from wind power since renewable energy is critical to achieving Fraport's self-imposed emission reduction goals. Therefore, the company is going to generate its own electricity at the airport, and in the Fraport Newsroom (2020) they say that “it is expected to generate over 1.5 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year – an amount that would power more than 450 four-person households for a year.” The picture depicts an open blue sky with a lot of clouds. The sky can represent unlimited capacity and endless opportunities for the company in terms of sustainability. The photovoltaic system of the roof gives an impression of a continuous process since the picture is taken so that we do not see the end of the building. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p. 140), the subjects on the images tend to be in a lower position in relation to the viewer's dominant and more powerful perspective because of the higher camera angles. The distance and point of view invite the viewer to see some of the building's details, and thus the depiction partially involves the audience.

Concerning the text analysis, an essential element included in the post is the hashtag: *takeoff2future*. Hashtags depict the company's brand identity as well, and this one has been used on Twitter in several posts related to sustainable aviation. The hashtag makes it easier on social media to track performance and attract new customers. Another technique used in advertising to improve the value of the slogan is the use of numeric figures or numbers. In the case of this slogan, number two is replaced by a numeric figure 2. The number makes the slogan shorter by two letters that already make an impact because the shorter the slogan, the better because it is a lot easier to remember. Moreover, the number stands out in the message, and the viewer can see it right away, it is more appealing and interesting. The slogan itself implies the process of leaving for a better, sustainable future.

Pictures taken at Frankfurt Airport

I visited Frankfurt Airport in person in April 2021. I was able to look and take few pictures at Terminal 1, which is the oldest and largest terminal at Frankfurt Airport, hosting both international and domestic flights and equipped with 103 boarding gates (airport-fra.com, 2021). At first sight, the airport did not scream sustainability. However, when looking better, many advertisements represent sustainability either directly of Fraport or companies such as Dell and Germany Works concept. In addition, most of the sitting areas at the Terminal are green, e.g., there is a forest wallpaper in front of the gates. The natural features are also incorporated in the “chilling zone” sitting area, where there is a wood-like floor and trees and

bushes placed around in the white pots. Overall, the area shapes a green airport environment to possibly better influence tourists' gaze and emotions.



Figure 10 Bottle return machine at Frankfurt airport (own source)

One of the most common physical advertisements of sustainability at Frankfurt Airport is the bottle return machine “Donate Your Empties” that supports various charities by the option to donate the full deposit fee. It is environmentally friendly and at the same time, it supports local and international non-profit organizations. However, the machine is located at various places throughout the terminal, mainly near the toilets or in front of the security checks. This positioning should ensure that passengers will notice the machines more easily, and therefore it is more likely that they will help the environment. The color of the return machine is green, which symbolizes the sustainable approach. One might say that the bottle donates system is well-known for German passengers, and international visitors do not know how it works. Therefore, they tried to attract the attention of non-German visitors by providing signs and improving the placement of the machines. Budeanu (2007, p. 499) stressed in her sustainability theories, that one of the key challenges to success toward sustainable tourism could be a lack of customer support. Frankfurt airport is trying to deal with this challenge by placing many of these machines throughout the airport and ensuring higher passenger involvement in sustainable

practices. Additionally, this eco-friendly representation of the airport meets all three main dimensions of sustainable tourism that were introduced in the theoretical framework. First, within environmental sustainability, the donation machines represent the intersection of human activity and eco-systems. Second, the social and cultural sustainability of the object improves the development of the community and reduces the negative effects on our environment. Third, from the economic sustainability point of view, it addresses the cost-effectiveness since the machine is based on donation and ensures the long-term feasibility of sustainable tourism.



Figure 11 Electric vehicle at Frankfurt Airport (own source)



Figure 12 Eco-stamp on the electric vehicle at Frankfurt Airport (own source)

Frankfurt Airport presents itself as sustainable also by using electric vehicles at the airport inside and outside areas. According to Fraport's electromobility infographic report, their commitment is “a key element of Fraport's climate protection efforts and stands for modern, innovative, and future-oriented ground handling operations at Germany's largest airport.” By using electric cars, CO₂ emissions at the airport are continuously being reduced. These vehicles are visible to passengers since they are parked at the terminals, ready to be used. Each car has a green stamp (see picture above) presenting the logo of reducing emissions. As we have seen in the branding theories of Kotler & Keller (2007, p. 249), the logo generally takes the initiative in a branding project because it gives the first interpretation of the brand and therefore raises awareness of the place. Usage of the green color on the stamp with the combination of the quite

big bold text “e-rsparm CO2” form a strong brand of sustainability at the airport. Moreover, the German word “ersparm” means “saved” in the English language. The creators of the brand highlighted the process of saving energy even more by adding an “e-“ abbreviation, that indicates something that is, in this case, electronic. The stamp placement is in the front of the vehicle, which allows passengers to notice it immediately. Concerning the perception of the airport’s audience, by applying Urry’s concept of the tourist gaze, we can say that there is a meaning behind the production of tourism. The airport does not only serve as a place for transportation for a holiday. It has a meaning, and every single advertisement or image at the airport shapes the tourist gaze. Overall, the vehicle acts as an object of interest, but more importantly, it tells the story of Frankfurt airport as a sustainable place.



Figure 13 Sustainable advertisement Germany Works at Frankfurt Airport (own source)

This advertisement is placed at Terminal 1 right at the beginning of the entrance with several other posters. By creating such a big and colorful advertisement, they make an effort to develop a strong friendship with their audience at the airport. They are also trying to obtain the trust of shareholders in particular by using various linguistic techniques such as personal pronouns to communicate their optimism, ambition, and cooperation. The colors on the picture look a bit oversaturated, however at the same time, when visiting the airport, the whole image looks very appealing, and the warm colors play an essential role. The design acts very lively,

however, there might be a meaning behind the choice of these colors. Yellow, black, and red are the colors of Germany. In addition, the name “Germany” is being mentioned there three times, which together with the colors represent national pride. There are machines depicted that can symbolize quality, production, and technological progress, which is also a characteristic of Germany. Therefore, we can say that in this advertisement, the form of tourist gaze is elicited by the national colors, but also by the contrast of words „you“, „the planet“, and “grow sustainability”. Showing that Germany is trying to make our world better and more sustainable is not interpreted directly by the images used in the advertisement, but rather the keywords that have specific associations with being environmentally friendly.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 109) suggested there are three compositional concepts in multimodal representation. First, the value of elements is determined by their position within the image in information importance. For example, we can see that the creators made the important slogan visible by using bold and big letters placed down to make it closer and more visible to the passengers since the advertisement has been hanging high. Second, prominence concerns the placement of objects either in the foreground or background in order to emphasize their significance and draw readers' attention. For example, in the foreground, they highlight the important text in the frames and the logo in the shape of Germany, using its national colors. Third, framing often concentrates on the appearance or the lack of a framing device. Framing in this context is important since in this case, it highlights what needs to be emphasized. All these rules apply to single images as well as integrated materials, such as illustrations taken at the airport.



Figure 14 Sustainable advertisement Dell at Frankfurt Airport (own source)

This advertisement is located at the beginning of the entrance of Terminal 1, together next to the poster above. Company Dell is one of the airport's partners and therefore, there can be seen quite a few advertisements representing the company. However, even though the advertisement officially belongs to Dell company, visitors perceiving the image and the main slogan perceive it as Fraport's. First, the letters naming the company are very small and placed in the corner of the advertisement. Second, by presenting this image and placing it at the biggest terminal with the huge influx of people, the airport tells a story of its own identity as well. According to the theories of sense of place and tourist gaze explained in the theoretical framework, the image's represented person's gaze on the advertisement could create an imaginary interactive relationship with the audience. The person is standing in the middle of an ice cave, aiming to touch one of the icicles. This brings us to the slogan itself, which says, "Our pledge runs deep". Caves, in general, are known as one of the deepest places in the world and in this case, the image nicely represents the meaning behind the slogan. On the other hand, the smaller text on the advertisement uses the word "core", while the core is usually associated with something extremely hot, red, and not able to touch.

The large capital letters express the most significant meaning, while the additional explanatory text is in lowercase letters and not in bold, making it more difficult to distinguish from a distance. From the discourse practice point of view, the creator of the slogan used the

possessive pronoun “our” to highlight that they are in charge of the change towards a sustainable future. By using the word “pledge” they are making a commitment and guarantee that they are serious about the goals of being environmentally friendly. Concerning the colors, the blue color stands for the water and the deep ice cave itself, but it also has some other meanings in branding strategies. In general, it is associated with tranquility, but it is also a color that helps the brands to promote trust and stability. The visual representation speaks to the younger/middle-aged audience because the overall design is very dynamic, progressive, and recent. In conclusion, the reference is clear, and the aim of the advertisement seems to be at the right place.

4.3 Interviews with the professionals

For the proper determination and more detailed image of the airport's sustainable branding strategies, I considered it essential to conduct interviews with professionals working at the two chosen airports. I reached Verena Dollberg and Jacco Bartelds by email, and they agreed to have a short call on the matters of sustainable branding. The interview with Verena was conducted on April 22, 2021. Because of the busy schedule of Schiphol's management, we were able to conduct the interview later, on May 27, 2021.

Here I present the questions that were prepared and asked by me during the interviews:

1. What role does sustainability play in the overall strategy of your company?
2. How do you define sustainability?
3. How do you communicate sustainability to your customers?
4. Who is your target group when it comes to sustainability brand/presentation?
5. Where do you believe your presentation of sustainability fits into the lives of your customers?
6. In your annual reports and on social media you present your vision of sustainability to people. What is the main story you are trying to sell through marketing and what are your fundamental values and qualities you want your brand to express?
7. You talk about sustainability online, via the website, and on social media. Is it visible at the airport that you are a “sustainable airport”? E.g., stickers/displays/posters about recycling, CO2 emissions, mobility...
8. What are the biggest challenges when creating a sustainable brand of the airport?
9. Do you monitor potential competitors regarding their presentation of sustainability?

10. Have you ever had to deal with a negative public relations situation regarding your communication of sustainability?
11. To what extent has the current pandemic situation changed sustainable practices at the airport?
12. How are you involving your employees in your sustainability initiatives?
13. Who, besides you, are the main stakeholders and policymakers in your presentation/brand message of sustainability?

Concerning Frankfurt Airport, I interviewed Verena Dollberg, who is currently working as a Consultant in Corporate Strategy and Airport Development at Frankfurt Airport. Verena has a tourism studies background as well and has broad experience with the aviation industry. Her department is responsible for the sustainability strategy, they set the goals, develop measures, track the goals, and have the actual work in all the fields of sustainability. However, there are specific departments for environmental issues that deal with CO2 emissions, the department that is responsible for air quality, the department responsible for noise, and a communication department.

Verena explained several aspects of Fraport branding and the main values and strategies of the airport. When it comes to sustainable branding itself, she highlighted that Fraport tries to almost avoid doing any branding, since the management is afraid to get into the niche of greenwashing. The main reason is that sustainability has become such a sensitive topic that Fraport is the last couple of years much more into the stakeholder communication, which they pay high importance to. In addition, they try to develop stakeholder dialogue with the communities around them. Another reason why Fraport does not support too much branding is that the airport has a long history with all the development programs and the neighborhood that does not like growing the airport bigger (primarily because of the noise). According to Verena, the company does not have any official marketing department but rather a communication department, focusing on press relations. However, there is not really a department that takes care of all the marketing material. However, Frankfurt Airport is doing a lot and Verena was also wondering why they do not communicate the airport's sustainable practices more to their customers. It is important not to go into the greenwashing area because, in the end, Fraport presents itself as a trustful member of its neighborhood. They have a sensitive environment in the neighborhood, so Fraport needs to be transparent and trustworthy, so they do not invest too much into branding. Recently there was a new photovoltaic plant on one of the roofs and such

things could be communicated more. (see Figure: Frankfurt Airport branding photovoltaic system on Twitter)

Presentation of the interview with Fraport representative

This section will present the main points and answers Verena provided me with during the call. Most of the questions were aimed at the sustainable brand of Frankfurt Airport. She remarked that the sustainability aspect truly plays an important role in the company's overall strategy and stays a high priority even despite the current pandemic situation in the world. The management works on various sustainability programs where it is possible to see all the fields the airport management is working on, including the targets and measures that have been done. One of them is the financial area communicated to people, especially by the annual reports, website, and press releases.

When it comes to the communication of sustainable practices to the customers, Fraport focuses on different target groups. Most importantly, stakeholder communication plays a big role, since it includes communication with the neighborhoods, communities, and majors. The key stakeholder group bubble (picture below) from the Sustainability report 2019 represents all the stakeholders that form a part of Fraport. Sustainability is important to all their stakeholders, whereas getting more and more important for the investors. However, for each stakeholder group sustainability aspect means something else. For example, for the neighborhoods and closer communities, noise and air quality are important aspects to deal with when it comes to sustainability. In addition, considering that the environmental topic is such an important one, Verena explained how the airport is cooperating with these communities. For instance, Fraport has special electric vehicles that go to the neighborhood and the responsible people talk about the airport's sustainable practices and what they do to prevent noise and make the air quality better. People from the airport who go to communities also hand fliers out about how to be more sustainable and what is the airport doing for the environment in general. Hence, it is not mass communication but more community approach and discussions with the locals. Fraport is focused on passenger communication and the neighborhood is very important as well.

According to Verena, the airport has so far, no cooperation with other airports, but they exchange some practices with the local ones. For example, there has been communication with Zurich airport discussing laws on how to improve the supply chain and how human rights are taken care of. My next question was related to the presentation of the main story the airport is trying to sell. Verena remarked that there is no specific claim for sustainability, however,

Fraport's main values are honesty and transparency, they want to avoid any way of greenwashing and do the best for the neighborhood in terms of sustainability and good relationships. Their main goal is to share 100% truth and honesty. In the last couple of years, there have been terminal expansions and the airport received negative feedback from the neighborhood communities. Negative public relation is therefore one of the reasons why the airport is very sensitive when it comes to marketing. The neighborhood has been very critical when the new runway has been opened and the airport had been expanded. There used to be demonstrations taking place every Monday by a group of people who have had the problem of having an airport close to the city. Moreover, there also has been negative press about the noise and bad air quality. Hence, the goal of the communications department is to highlight the environmental aspect and make closer and positive contact with the communities.

Although Verena argued that in the past, the responsibility of sustainable marketing was mostly an issue of the financial department and they did only highlight the aspect of financial relations. Now their goal is to improve their relationship with the communication department also to get some more awareness of sustainability there. They would like to create a stronger link with the passengers. Even though Fraport is very much focused on passenger communication and they claim that Facebook and other social media are regularly updated to inform passengers about the airport's activities, we cannot see the sustainable activities there. Especially nowadays are travelers interested more in sustainable companies and therefore a better eco-advertising could be a good improvement of Fraport's communication.

Concerning cooperation with other parties, Verena said that Fraport is a part of the ACI group (Airports Council International), working on the airport's developments such as how the air quality can be improved. According to the official website of ACI group, it “represents airports interests with Governments and international organizations such as ICAO, develops standards, policies and recommended practices for airports, and provides information and training opportunities to raise standards around the world” (aci.aero/about-aci, 2021).

One of my questions was related to the importance of sustainability during the current pandemic situation. Verena remarked that the sustainable approach stayed the same importance, including more stakeholders and more funding. However, the aspect of vulnerability changed since it has been a more stressful time for the airport management. Regarding the main stakeholders, there are all levels of them and policymakers in terms of sustainability, including regional, national, European, and even international shaping the sustainable initiatives. Their current goal is to make sure how to report sustainability measures, as they are trying to change

the airport's website to be more complete and better. There has been a marketing department, but when the responsible person left, the airport management decided not to continue running the marketing department, which may be why Fraport's social media focused on terminal information rather than sustainability.

Concerning the physical branding of sustainability at the airport, according to Verena, there are stickers in the bathrooms saying that it is supposed to use tissues but rather blowers to save paper. Waste management is everywhere at the airport and there is a big problem gate showing sustainability and eco-practices.

Final insights from the interview consist of surprising comments from Verena, such as employee initiatives in sustainable practices. She explained that there is a lot of internal communication about sustainability. That is because of the educational programs that include training on how to save gas by improving driving habits by switching the engine off when stopping and other courses related to specific fields such as wildlife management. Employee-wise, Verena thinks there is much more internal communication of sustainability than the public one. She argues that the employees always know what is being done, and the management tries to make them as aware as possible.

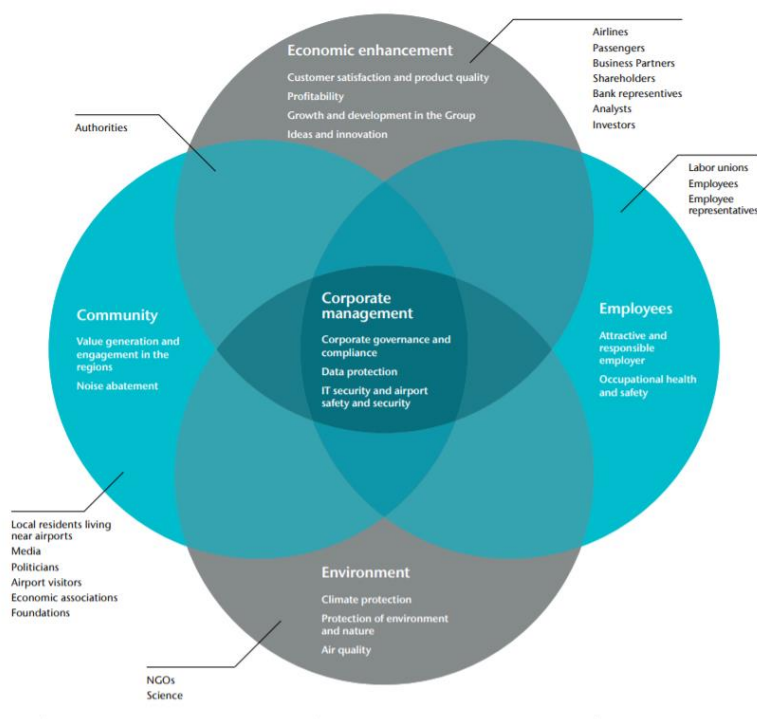


Figure 15 Key stakeholder groups (Sustainability Fraport 2019)

Presentation of the Interview with Schiphol Airport representative

Regarding the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, I interviewed Jacco Bartelds who is working for Royal Schiphol Group as Advisor External Affairs. Before, he worked for the government information center and with his background, he is currently responsible for external relations, mostly being in contact with non-political stakeholders. His contacts also include the non-policy side of the government. His main subject is sustainability that he has been working on the most. According to Jacco, Schiphol is taking place in some coalitions such as the “Smart and sustainable” plan. He cooperates with partners from, for example, the “Sustainability table” for the climate agreement in Paris that Schiphol is part of.

Here, I will present the most critical insights that Jacco provided me with during the interview. First, he remarked that one of Schiphol’s most significant ambitions is to become the most sustainable airport. They are trying to achieve this goal by various sustainable practices at the airport. Among all the environmentally friendly ones, such as waste management, reduction of CO2 emissions, or local food provision at the airport, Jacco said that Schiphol puts a lot of effort into electrifying lots of things. These include the GPUs (Ground Power Units) that are placed at almost all gates for the planes. Regarding promoting these practices, they can all be found in the key document of sustainability of Schiphol, called Roadmap. It is a report that concludes all the essential information, and passengers can get an idea of what the airport is doing to be more sustainable.

However, according to Jacco, passengers do not form the most important stakeholder group. He explained that they come second since passengers are the customers of the airlines. Therefore, when it comes to campaigns and advertisements, it is mostly the job of airlines, and the airport is rather focused on the passenger experience at the location. He further explained that Royal Schiphol Group created a so-called Sustainable passenger journey, which offers the customers the real sustainable experience. Jacco argued that they want to make bends together by this journey and bring the most critical messages to the customers. The journey includes the already mentioned local food at the airport, sustainable coffee places, recycling, the LED lights all over the shopping area, refill water taps, and most importantly, the train station that is underneath the airport and provides a convenient and more sustainable transport to and from the airport.

My other question was oriented on social media promotion and how does he think that the promotion of sustainability fits into the lives of the customers. Jacco made a very interesting point, and so that they recognize that LinkedIn is more business-oriented and therefore they try to post there more background, detailed and serious information about the practices at the airport. On the other hand, information about the sustainability of Schiphol on social media such as Facebook or Twitter serves more for fun, presenting pictures and nice-to-know information. Like this, they differentiate their target groups and are aware of their audience.

The pandemic situation affected the airport financially. However, the vision of becoming the most sustainable airport maintained. Moreover, according to Jacco, the current situation allowed them to improve smartly and rethink the actions that have been done. Also, it had been remarked that currently, in the end, the most important stakeholder is their own personnel since they have to breathe sustainability, and they should also be the main point of contact when it comes to sustainable promotion at the airport.

Comparison of the interviews

The interviews with the professionals revealed that Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt Airports are with the essential cooperation with ACI really working on the sustainable future. According to Verena and Jacco, sustainability is an aspect that plays an important role in the overall strategy of both airports and has a high priority. Jacco explained that the marketing department is aware of the differentiation of the target groups on social media and thus their presentation of sustainability is quite decent there. On the other hand, Verena said that Fraport does not really have a marketing department, and therefore, the communication of sustainable practices is lacking. Perhaps the main difference between these two airports lies in the fact that Jacco, the representative interviewee of Schiphol, emphasized promoting the airport's sustainability in their Sustainable passenger journey, which is not only a visual representation but also an educational experience. Therefore, one might say that Schiphol Airport presents its sustainability more in an experiencing way and Fraport in visual and written way. Based on the interviews, we can say that the goal of both airports is to communicate sustainable practices to their customers better.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusions

In the process of writing this thesis, I employed a variety of concepts and theories to answer the research questions. I analyzed the relevant sections on the official websites of the two airports, their social media posts, and finally, pictures of sustainable advertising at the airports. Moreover, in order to get more in-depth information about sustainable branding, I conducted and analyzed two interviews with the professionals. Lastly, I discuss the conclusions drawn from insights gained from the theoretical and methodological framework.

It has been shown that the airports use both textual and visual languages to establish corporate green domination and keep their power by establishing a corporate social and environmental discourse when expressing sustainable practices. This thesis' analysis demonstrated the importance of language and image and how the choice of vocabulary, colors and placement or location can be used to influence, manipulate, and persuade customers. In the case of both airports, images take priority over written text or representations of places since the aim is to convince the audience and provide a wide range of choices, events, and visualizations of sustainable activities. However, on the websites, the text is only used to name phenomena and to give the viewer a more detailed explanation of the problematics. Furthermore, since there is a slight difference between the written and visual representations of sustainability, it is reasonable to assume that the airports' branding is considered more necessary to be shown and represented visually. The reason is that visitors look by their tourist gaze at the identities and any form of visual representation at the airport that can create an experience. In addition, the characteristics mentioned in previous sections suggest that a possible customer's first experience of the website would be an image of the airport from the outside area, which suggests that the first impression should be appealing.

Organizations' slogans need to satisfy the demands and expectations of their customers, whether they are local or international. To accomplish this aim, their brand slogans should be endowed with global characteristics that consider the sociocultural contexts of people from various cultural and social contexts. From the socio-cultural point of view, as Jacco Bardelds argued during our interview, the branding and promotion of the place have the potential to influence not just how tourists perceive the airport but also how the local communities do, too. Therefore, it was essential to know that the promotion tools should be unique and not something

that passengers would expect. As noticed during the exploration, Frankfurt airport has shown a lack of promotion in regard to the online promotion of sustainability on various social media channels. However, at the location, the advertising is visible in multiple forms. First, there are posters promoting sustainability that highlight the goals the company stands for. Therefore, to achieve this goal, they use promotional strategies to induce attraction and interest. Looking at the sense of place approach taken in the analysis, one may argue that the positioning and the emotional interaction of the advertisements and objects at the Frankfurt Airport are effective. The majority of the visual representations of Fraport show either the objects that are connected to nature and the environment (such as trees, sky, electric vehicles with the eco-stamp, the green waiting area at the airport) or verbal associations representing the sustainable identity of the airport.

Compared to Fraport, the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport represents its identity by short and accurate slogans using adjectives and personal pronouns to connect with people and positively affect the audience. Therefore, we can see that the goals and missions of the company correspond with the advertising and the promotion of sustainability. Moreover, it has been shown that Schiphol airport does not have many sustainable advertisements at the airport, especially at the entrance and Terminal 1. However, to show how sustainable they are, they instead created a so-called Sustainable passenger journey at the physical location of the airport, which is, according to Jacco Bartelds, a good way to experience sustainability better and create a sense of place for the passengers. Thus, the tourist gaze is also evoked by these special objects at the airport.

Taking the critical discourse analysis approach in the case of both airports, it has been examined that the use of colors plays an important role. Concerning Schiphol Airport, we can see that they mostly use purple color in their advertisements and objects promoting sustainability, referring to royalty and trust. On the other hand, in the case of Frankfurt Airport, the blue and green colors are dominant, standing for nature, optimism, and happiness. Thus, both airports communicate their sustainable identity by the usage of different colors and designs.

Based on the concepts used in my thesis, I think that the lack of a sense of place in the airport's brand can negatively affect the social and cultural value of the brand, resulting in a picture that is not consistent with place identity. Also, suppose passengers do not play a role in the branding process. In that case, there can be a lack of appreciation, acceptance, and

engagement from the local population, which may influence the quality of the tourist experience in a negative way. Therefore, I consider the Sustainable passenger journey of Schiphol Airport as a good example of promoting sustainability since the direct interaction with the visitors makes them active participants in the branding process. On the other hand, since the growing professionalism in marketing has normalized the tourist gaze within the tourism industry, experiences are essential and the promoting and images themselves. Sustainable marketing campaigns and advertisements tend to gain a positive image, resulting in many travelers. Therefore, Schiphol Airport could be focused more on better advertisement of sustainability at the main entrance and Terminal 1. Nowadays, the most significant promotion is in front of the airport, which is an excellent location ensuring visibility and awareness. However, after entering the airport, a visitor cannot really find a sustainable promotion.

In conclusion, the analysis presents overall three main theoretical contributions. First, the study contributed to the expertise about the current green marketing of the airports by determining how the branding practices differ. Second, this thesis adds to the literature on sustainable branding of airports by demonstrating how they are formed using visual and textual representations. And finally, my research builds a critical view of how the airports have an impact on the understanding and knowledge of sustainable consumption by linking it to the fact that the airports are able to affect the importance of environmental sustainability. In addition, by researching the mentioned areas, I gained more knowledge in tourism and marketing theories and the problematics of the airports, sustainability, and the climate crisis we are currently facing. In addition, thanks to the interviews with the professionals working at the chosen airports, I gained more insights into the companies' internal processes. I got to know more about running a marketing department and its daily responsibilities. And finally, writing this master thesis helped me think critically about things taking different approaches and applying them to the tourism industry.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

This research has a few limitations that offer possibilities for further research. Firstly, when researching sustainable branding at the physical location of the airport, the possibility to look at all the gates behind the security checks would give us a different image and more opportunities to see the promotion there. Second, the scope of this research is focused on online advertising on social media and physical advertising at airports. However, future research might investigate the sustainable discourse of other promotional mediums, such as magazines of the

airports and other printed materials. In addition, it would be interesting to see the sustainable airport branding from a demand-side perspective, such as what is the opinion of the passengers and visitors of the airport and how they perceive and experience the sustainable practices of the airport. And lastly, this research has been based on two chosen airports in Western Europe. To extend the findings and explore more differences to raise awareness of sustainability, the green marketing of more European or non-European airports could be analyzed together with content-wise meaningfully absent.

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Appendix

Transcription of the interview with Jacco Bartelds from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

Sona: How would you define sustainability and what part does it play in the overall strategy of Schiphol?

Jacco: One of our main goals is to be the most sustainable airport and therefore we developed the roadmap that characterizes what sustainability means for us and it brings us to Net-zero emissions 2030. This has a big impact, and it has an impact on the overall location of Schiphol. Things we are achieving is by electrifying lots of things on our side, all kinds of materials will run out of fuels. We're trying to electrify them, not only cars but also think of GPUs. So, the electric power units for airplanes are a really important one. And normally, when an airplane lands at a gate, it still needs some power to run its critical systems. Most of the time they just turn on the engine and let the engine run the whole time. But that's very polluting and therefore, we try to get in on electricity. So, the gates we all have the possibility for airplanes to put in their electricity.

Sona: And this is possible for all the gates at the airport?

Jacco: Yes, almost all the gates and where it's not available, we have mobile GPUs. So it's something we're working on. And we were quite far from achieving the end goal. That's an example of how to achieve net-zero emissions at the airport, but also our heating system. We work with the storage underground systems to heat the whole facility and not use any gas. So that's for our ground operations. In that part, sustainability, it's really important, it's almost in all the things we do. With agreements with our contractors, sustainability is always a paragraph on how they bring their supplies to our facilities. For example, they have to bring everything with electric cars, and not fossil fuels anymore. So that kind of thing we try to arrange agreements with all our partners that play a big role, too.

Sona: Yes, in the Roadmap report 2019 there is all the information that a passenger needs to know if he/she is interested in the sustainable practices at the airport, which you have also in the Annual report 2020.

Jacco: Right? Yeah, it's really lovely. To give you an idea about how we are doing, the Roadmap is our Holy Grail. So that's the way how to achieve net-zero emissions, and every quarter we make up for the achievements.

Sona: Okay and how else do you how do you think you communicate sustainability to your customers?

Jacco: Yeah, that we have to make difference between different stakeholders. Because our customers are mainly the airlines and not the passengers. They come in second place because passengers are the customers of the airlines. So, we facilitate the airlines, and their customer is the passenger. Of course, we also have to deal with them, but that it's not our main focus. We of course communicate sustainability to passengers, and we try to do that at the airport, itself, so we don't have campaigns or anything like that. But we try to give the passengers a sustainable journey. We offer food and beverage at the airport. And we are turning them more and more into more sustainable parties, so offer them local foods, reduce the plastics. But we're not the owner of those stores. So, we have to collaborate with those parties too. So that makes it really difficult for us. We have to work together with all the partners who operate in our terminals and make bends with them together to bring over the message to us to the customers. We also tried to communicate to the passengers to come to the airport most sustainably. Therefore, we have a train station underneath Schiphol. Well, that's ideal for people to come with public transport and that's the most sustainable way to come to the airport, or on your bicycle, of course, but it's not possible for everyone. So we try to reduce people using their cars to bring people to the airport. So, on each of those topics, we have a passenger journey, where we assign each moment where we are in contact with passengers on that journey. At the contact moments, we try to inform them, and let them know that they're there rejoice to make their journey more sustainable. So, use local food, don't use plastics, refill your bottle at water tap points. So that they're the kind of things we are getting in place right now. It's a process and to be honest, communication to passengers, is something we are just building. And looking at how we can do that in a normal way, that'd be good. You have to imagine when someone is going to travel, sustainability is not something on top of their minds. They want to find a gate, they're stressed out, they have to go to security, to border control, them getting lined for boarding. So, these are all stressful moments and not the right moments to talk about sustainability. So, we're trying to use the moments when a passenger is eating something or makes use of a toilet. These are the points we can talk about, talk to them about sustainability, and how they can well help the environment.

Sona: I also saw when I was at the airport, that along the shopping area there are these LED lamps. This is also part of the passenger journey, I guess, because the LED lighting forms a big part of sustainability at the airport, and it reminds the passengers that you are environmentally friendly.

Jacco: Yes, we're trying to transform all lights to LED. We have a nice program in one of our largest lamps to the light bulbs you see at the ceiling. There are not ours. So, we are only paying for light. And the light bulbs are still from Philips, they made them and are owners of the light bulbs. And what's going to happen there is that Philips tries to give light bulbs who last longer, and when there need to be replaced, taken back to factory use all the materials to make some new lights. So, we call that light a service. It's a very interesting new method to deal with ownership of assets. So, in effect, what we are saying, if the producer of the assets stays the owner of the asset, they will use other methods to give it a longer life and they can take it back so they can reuse materials. Because when we have a light bulb that is broken, we throw it away in the garbage, and then it's gone. So, we don't think that's a good way to deal with assets. We are really looking into each asset that we own as a company; we can give it a longer life. So, when we replace a building or refurbish it or whatever, we know what to do with these materials, and maybe we can reuse them or sell them to other parties that can use them. And that way you can become fully circular. You can apply that almost to every asset. So that's something also we are developing. It is very interesting and that's the story we try to tell our passengers as well. Or when you plug your phone into the power supply, the power symbol is from Dutch windmills. When you get in touch with these elements, that's the way we communicate. And it's only to our passengers and that's an important stakeholder. But, of course, we communicate about sustainability also to politics, and policymakers, our sector partners, so it's a broader scale.

Sona: Yeah, that's very interesting. My other question was, what is your target group? But you also sort of said that first your focus on airlines, and then airlines are focused on passengers as their major target group.

Jacco: Yes, it is different, because when it comes to personal communication, we try to seduce the passenger to make use of the more sustainable things we offer. But another important target group is policymakers, we want to invest in the right kind of things. So, if we want to make flying more sustainable, well, I would try to have a mandate for biofuels or sustainable fuels. So, therefore, they are also an important target group. And so, we tried to accomplish that and talk into them. So that's well, but I don't think you will focus is on that issue.

Sona: I mention policymakers and stakeholders in my thesis, but both very briefly, just like they are part of the whole process.

Jacco: Yeah, for me and my job, they are more important than the passenger. Because I believe it's our responsibility to give the person your sustainable journey. I think as a company, you're, you have a responsibility to offer sustainable products that make travel more sustainable. And of course, we can say people want the cheapest tickets and just want to travel. Yes, of course, it's true. But so if we don't take a stand in our responsibility, nobody else does it.

Sona: Okay, my next question is where do you believe your presentation of sustainability fits into the lives of your customers? There's maybe a question also oriented to social media because I follow Schiphol Airport on all social media and people responsible for the social media, present a lot about sustainability and what is the airport doing for the better future. So, it's also a way of branding and promotion.

Jacco: Yeah, sure, yes, my colleague who does that we have good contact about that, we try to tell our story about sustainability. And that's how it works on social media. We can just tell everything we do, but that doesn't always work so then we try to make it more interesting to people to see and to read, and to show them what we are really doing in sustainability. Because there are also other stories to tell, to make sure passengers have fun and receive interesting facts. And also, where we use different social channels, on LinkedIn, it's more for business and more interesting for background. On the other hand, Facebook, and Twitter are more for fun and pictures and nice-to-know things. So yeah, we use social media to bring our story because one of your next questions is also going about how do you make Schiphol's identity more sustainable? Yeah, that's really difficult. Because we're a sector, we facilitate airplanes. And airplanes are not sustainable. So that is, it's a difficult story. But we really do believe that in the future, flying can be sustainable. But it does take a long time of innovation. And that's what we try to tell. So, we try to give people a perspective, in 2030, or 2050, how flying looks like in that time, and then you give some something to work towards. So that's what we're trying to do.

Sona: I read an article about electric flying in cooperation with other airports in Hague, Groningen, Rotterdam, and Eindhoven. How is this plan developing?

Jacco: Yeah, you should see that as a pilot. We want to learn about electric flying, and I think shortly, electric flying is possible, but only on short distances. So, because the batteries are too heavy to fly for a long trip, but we have to learn about it. What kind of facilities do we need at the airport? How much energy do we need? How do electric planes behave? So, they test so it's

a pilot to learn about the electric fly. We are planning to offer lots of electric flying in the Netherlands because we have trains, and the Netherlands is small to fly in small distances but it's a pilot to learn about electric flying and that is what we presented. Would you get into an electric plane?

Sona: I think so, but so far only for a short distance. In 10 years, it can be a totally different story and it's really interesting to see the progress, so I am very curious about flying in few years and how airports and manufacturers will cope with that.

Sona: I also visited Schiphol Airport to check the branding physically there. The only thing I was maybe expecting more, was the promotion of sustainability in form of posters or stickers for example on the toilets, where people could use the blowing machine instead of paper after washing the hands. But I didn't find it there and generally, it was rather difficult to notice any form of sustainability in the main terminal.

Jacco: Yeah, it's something which is in progress, but I think we can improve the communication towards passengers. We have a pier from where there are international flights, and we decorate it with only sustainable materials. And therefore, also we inform people what they see on the platform. So, there's a big gate with only windows and at the windows, we have stickers that are like augmented reality, you can see what's happening with that platform and there we tell what's sustainable at the platform.

Sona: But as you've also said, the passenger journey says a lot because people are experiencing it. They're at a cafe, which is more sustainable, and eating local food and seeing the LED lights, shows the real sustainable promotion of the airport. The next question is related to any challenges that you may encounter when creating a sustainable brand of the airport.

Jacco: Yeah, we just touched on that subject. That's difficult because we, as an airport, can be completely sustainable in 2030. But for the airlines it is impossible. When people talk about Schiphol, they always think that I work at KLM. They combine it and they get confused about it. And of course, it facilitates the flying itself, so I think that's why we also invest in getting more sustainable aviation fuels also at Schiphol, within the airlines, with newer airplanes, while they get a reduction on their fees, so we try to get the more sustainable planes. But in the end, it's not our responsibility. So, we can endorse it, but it's difficult for us to be seen as a sustainable brand. I don't think in the end, it's our goal to be a sustainable brand, but to be the most sustainable airport. And that's something we tried to communicate about. Also, to give a good feeling about the traveling. I think the most important thing we have to deal with is

greenwashing. We really believe you can fly more sustainably. You have to see it in the future and some people say we have to replace all European flights by train. But in the end, I don't think that's more sustainable. Because for train, you need lots of infrastructures, you need rails.

Sona: But concerning the greenwashing, there was the campaign of KLM the fly responsibly, where they even say like you should take the train instead of an airplane.

Jacco: Yes when you go to Brussels or Paris, for instance, then you take the train. We are working together with KLM on that also with the NS rail party so that people make more use of the train for shorter distances. So that is for London, Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, and Berlin. So that's what we're trying to do here. And then, of course, the train stops at Amsterdam Schiphol, so if you want to transfer passengers for instance, from the United States going to Brussels, they fly to Amsterdam, and then they could plane from Amsterdam to Brussels. But for the last part of their journey, we would like to take them on the train, which has to need a good connection between plane and train, that is also something we try to accomplish. And there's not that easy.

Sona: Yeah, that sounds very difficult.

Jacco: But it's something we can manage so we worked on that. We want to offer a sustainable journey to passengers and I think that's the most important thing we try to reach.

Sona: Do you mind your potential competitors regarding the presentation of sustainability? And of course, “competitors” is a strong word, because we should all cooperate together to achieve sustainability, but I think there is naturally some competition between the airports to show, who is doing it better and worse.

Jacco: Yeah, of course, we're looking at airports and what they're doing and it's completely what you say, we work together. We have coalitions with all the airports, and we are exchanging experiences with each other. And we talk to each other about things we try to manage and learn from each other. So, I, it's what you say, we're not really competitive. Because we're all in it together. And a solution lies within the cooperation. Every year we come together and see presentations about things we've learned and share them with other airports. So, it's really more like the community. Of course, we also compete on flights and other kinds of things. But when it comes to sustainability, we are learning from each other. And also, the ACA plays a big role in this since ACA is our branch organization for airports.

Sona: Now, if you ever had to deal with the negative public relations situation regarding the communication of sustainability, I would maybe refer to the greenwashing part because that's a big challenge.

Jacco: Yeah. Because when it comes to flying, people living nearby an airport, deliver complaints about sounds, but also about pollution. And they unite and try to give our negative comments on social media. So, I think we have to deal with that and communicate with each other. And we have to understand what the problems are and then deal with them. And they have to understand that we are working on sustainable aviation and trying to get a better product also for them. So, I think there therefore we need to reach out to those stakeholders as well. But of course, sometimes you have to deal with negative information we try to answer well as honestly as we can, about things people are holding against us.

Sona: Has the current pandemic situation changed or postponed some of the sustainable practices at the airport?

Jacco: Yeah, well, we don't have that much money anymore and therefore we have to make some important choices. With some things, we push them a little bit forward. But I think the main goal of the roadmap is still in place and we still maintain our vision of getting zero emissions in 2030. So, I think it's really good that we still invest in more sustainable aviation and airport. However, it is a big opportunity to improve smartly. We also go to reset so we can think again about how we want to fly, which gives us an opportunity, because it builds back better, and I think that's really what we're doing.

Sona: How are you involving your employees in your sustainability initiatives? Do you design some training or seminars about sustainable practices at the airport?

Jacco: Yeah, we give training to our MBAs on how to get sustainability part of your work. Often, we give some lectures, but things we're doing, and internal communication is really important. So maybe we said that customers, but also policymakers are really important, but I think the most important stakeholder is our own personnel. They have to breathe sustainability; it has to be part of our way to work. Then it goes for almost everyone at Schiphol. So, everyone has to deal with it. We have the sustainability manager and each month we have a meeting with a delegation from every part of Schiphol. So, each directory has its people in this meeting, and in that way, we manage our sustainability goals and internalize the things we want to accomplish.