



CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF UNIQLO'S SUSTAINABLE MARKETING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO PURCHASE DECISIONS

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Abstract: This study analyzes how consumer perceptions of sustainable marketing conducted by Uniqlo influence their purchasing decisions. In an era where sustainability is a major concern, consumers increasingly consider environmental and social aspects when choosing products. This research uses a quantitative method through a survey of Uniqlo consumers in Semarang to measure the impact of perceptions of sustainable marketing. The results show that consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing have a positive and significant influence on their purchasing decisions. Positive perceptions enhance brand loyalty, trust, and willingness to pay a premium price, while negative perceptions can reduce purchasing decisions. These findings highlight the importance of sustainable marketing strategies in building a strong brand image and supporting consumer purchasing decisions. This study provides valuable insights for companies to improve sustainability in their business practices to meet the expectations of modern consumers.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era, consumer perceptions are influenced by sustainable marketing carried out by companies (Kumar & Christodouloupoulou, 2014). Consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability in the products they choose, making sustainability considerations in choosing a product increasingly important as one of the factors in making purchasing decisions (Wepo, 2024). A survey by McKinsey & Company (2022) showed that many consumers prefer brands that are committed to social responsibility and sustainability, reflecting a change in the values held by society. This highlights that consumers not only consider quality and price, but also the impact of products on the environment and society. Gleim et al. (2022) add that the way consumers perceive the alignment between a product and sustainability strategy plays an important role in shaping organizational outcomes, indicating that consumers tend to choose products from brands that they believe demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability.

Along with increasing attention to sustainability, consumer perceptions of brands are also undergoing significant changes (Nielsen, 2015). The perception that consumers have of a brand and its offerings is very important in the purchase decision-making process. According to Gong et al. (2023) found that sustainable marketing initiatives can improve brand image, which in turn increases customer engagement and sustainable purchase intentions. In this context, consumers are increasingly focused on the sustainable marketing approach implemented by companies.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between sustainable marketing and consumer perceptions, highlighting the significant influence that sustainable practices can have on consumer attitudes and purchase decisions (Fitriani et al., 2021). Consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by a variety of factors, including their perceptions of the brands and products on offer. When consumers perceive that a brand demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, they are more likely to be willing to purchase products from that brand. Research by (Joshi and Rahman, 2019) shows that consumer purchasing behavior is significantly influenced by their perceptions of product sustainability attributes. In addition, (Asriah, 2020) found that consumers who have positive perceptions of brand sustainability efforts are more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing behavior. Thus, it can be concluded that consumers' perceptions of brands' commitment to implementing sustainability practices play a key role in influencing their purchasing decisions.

Given the importance of sustainability in shaping purchasing decisions, Uniqlo, as one of the major players in the fast fashion industry, has endeavored to meet consumer expectations for sustainable products. The brand is known for its "Lifewear" concept, which highlights the quality, comfort and sustainability of its products (Fast Retailing, 2023). Uniqlo has launched various initiatives that demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practices, such as the use of eco-friendly materials and clothing recycling programs. Consumers who are aware of these initiatives may consider sustainability factors in their purchasing decisions, thus creating higher loyalty and trust in the brand.

This study aims to analyze how consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing influence consumer purchasing decisions. By understanding consumers' views, insight can be gained into the effectiveness of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing strategy in influencing purchasing behavior. The results of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of sustainability in consumer purchasing decisions in an increasingly competitive fast fashion era.

Sustainable marketing is important today because consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2020). Sustainable marketing not only focuses on meeting the needs of current consumers without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, but also focuses on the long-term impact of business practices on the planet and society (Belz & Peattie, 2009). This approach includes initiatives such as the use of recycled materials, energy efficiency in production, transparency in the supply chain, and making ethics and sustainability an integral part of the brand image (Kotler, 2016). (Kumar and Christodouloupoulou 2014) added that sustainable marketing also includes aspects of social responsibility that involve empowering local communities and fair labor practices. Therefore, when companies adopt these practices, they can not only improve their reputation but also strengthen the loyalty of consumers who are increasingly concerned about sustainability.

In the context of the fashion industry, sustainable marketing can include various practices such as using environmentally friendly materials, reducing production waste, applying circular economy principles, and encouraging responsible consumption (Todeschini et al., 2017). Fashion brands that implement sustainable marketing strategies tend to have a more positive brand image in the eyes of consumers (Ray & Nayak, 2023). This is consistent with Niinimäki's (2010) findings that consumers increasingly value transparency and brand commitment to sustainable marketing. Ray & Nayak (2023) state that sustainable fashion marketing practices have to include the use of innovative materials, recycling systems, and collaboration with recycling communities, all of which aim to develop a more sustainable and responsible fashion industry. The integration of digital technology in sustainable fashion marketing, such as blockchain for supply chain transparency (Witjaksono et al., 2024). From material innovation to the integration of digital technologies, the evolution of increasingly sophisticated sustainable marketing practices has created a new dynamic in the interaction between brands and consumers, which in turn affects how consumers understand and evaluate brands' sustainability efforts. In the context of the evolution of increasingly complex sustainable marketing practices, an in-depth understanding of consumer perceptions is crucial, as these perceptions play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of corporate strategies (Gong et al., 2023). Environmental awareness and knowledge of sustainability issues play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions of sustainable marketing practices (Joshi and Rahman, 2019). Brand sustainability initiatives, such as product recycling programs and the use of environmentally friendly materials, can have a positive impact on consumer perceptions of

brands (White et al., 2019). This relates to the growing importance of social and environmental values in the decision-making process of modern consumers.

Positive perceptions of sustainable marketing influence purchase decisions through the formation of brand loyalty and willingness to pay more (Pancic et al., 2023). Brand loyalty resulting from positive perceptions of sustainable marketing practices tends to increase purchase frequency and consumer preference for the brand (Neha et al., 2024). Furthermore, (Moser, 2015) found that consumers who have a positive view of sustainable marketing tend to be willing to pay a premium price for sustainable products, which directly affects their purchasing decisions. In an era where consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental impacts, this willingness to pay premium suggests that sustainability values can be a key driver in the formation of brand loyalty and purchase decisions.

Furthermore, consumer purchasing decisions are also influenced by positive brand images, especially those that demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices (Chen, 2010). When consumers fully understand the environmental impact of their consumption choices, they are more likely to make purchase decisions in favor of environmentally friendly products and brands (Groening et al., 2018). To encourage sustainable product purchase decisions, companies need to effectively communicate their values and commitment to green practices to consumers (Papadas et al., 2017). Good communication not only increases consumers' knowledge of sustainable products, but also strengthens brand associations with social and environmental values, ultimately influencing loyalty and purchase behavior.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative methods through surveys to analyze consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing and its implications for purchasing decisions. The survey method is used because it is effective in collecting data on consumer perceptions in a marketing context. The population in this study were Uniqlo consumers in Semarang. The sample size determined was 71 respondents, in accordance with the guidelines from (Sugiyono, 2017), which states that a feasible sample size in research is between 30 and 500. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, where respondents were selected based on specific criteria that ensure relevance to the research objectives (Malhotra, 2020). Sample criteria include: (1) 18-45 years old. The selection of this age range is based on the fact that this age group is Uniqlo's main market segment, which tends to be more active in following fashion trends and has sufficient purchasing power for Uniqlo products (Hitesh Bhasin, 2019).

Data was collected through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections: (1) respondents' demographic profile, (2) perception of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing, and (3) purchase decision. The variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), which is a common standard in consumer behavior research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2022). The questionnaire was distributed to respondents online through Google Forms, with links shared through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. To obtain a representative sample size, this survey used a purposive sampling technique, where respondents were selected based on certain criteria relevant to this study, such as Uniqlo consumers who have purchased their products. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive analytical methods to describe consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing and its implications for purchasing decisions. Descriptive statistics in the form of averages (mean) and distributions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study highlight the demographic profile and perceptions of Uniqlo consumers in Semarang, focusing on their awareness of sustainable marketing and its impact on purchase decisions. Among the 71 respondents, a majority were female (60.56%), with the largest age group being 25–34 years old (52.11%), followed by 18–24 and 35–45 years old. Most respondents were private employees (42.25%), a reflection of Uniqlo's primary market segment, working-age individuals with active lifestyles and disposable income. The data revealed that a significant portion of respondents were aware of Uniqlo's sustainability initiatives, such as recycling programs and the use of eco-friendly materials. Many perceived these efforts positively, with sustainability playing a notable role in shaping their purchase decisions. Factors such as product quality, affordable pricing, and corporate social responsibility emerged as key considerations, with respondents particularly valuing the balance between sustainability and practicality in Uniqlo's offerings.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results

CONSUMER PERCEPTION								
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score	Average
Commitment to Marketing		0	0	0	35	36	320	4.51
Information Regarding Sustainability		0	0	1	25	45	328	4.62
Marketing strategy		0	0	0	26	45	329	4.63
Marketing program		0	0	0	29	42	326	4.59
Product offering		0	0	2	33	36	318	4.48
PURCHASE DECISION								
Purchase Consistency		0	0	1	30	40	323	4.55
Purchase Quantity		0	0	0	26	45	329	4.63
Purchase Intention		0	0	1	30	40	323	4.55
Alternative Evaluation		0	0	1	23	47	330	4.65
Purchase Decision on Sustainability		0	0	0	19	52	336	4.73

(Source: survey results data, 2024)

The results indicate that consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing efforts are overwhelmingly positive, as reflected in the high average scores across all aspects. The strongest perception lies in Uniqlo's Marketing Strategy (4.63), demonstrating that consumers recognize and value the brand's deliberate and well-structured approach to integrating sustainability into its marketing initiatives. This suggests that Uniqlo has effectively positioned itself as a brand that prioritizes sustainability, resonating well with its target audience. Similarly, the high score for Information Regarding Sustainability (4.62) highlights that the brand successfully communicates its sustainability goals and achievements, fostering a sense of trust and transparency among consumers. The aspect of Commitment to Marketing (4.51) suggests that consumers perceive Uniqlo as dedicated to embedding sustainability within its broader marketing agenda. This perception reinforces the brand's reputation as a socially responsible entity. However, the slightly lower score for Product Offering (4.48) suggests that while consumers appreciate the sustainability efforts embedded in Uniqlo's products, there may be an expectation for more visible or tangible eco-friendly features, such as the use of organic materials, sustainable packaging, or recycling initiatives tied directly to the products they purchase.

Overall, these perceptions indicate that Uniqlo's sustainable marketing strategy positively impacts the brand's image, positioning it as a forward-thinking and environmentally conscious company. Consumers' strong agreement with the various aspects of sustainability marketing reflects their alignment with Uniqlo's values and a willingness to support brands that address environmental concerns. This positive perception likely enhances brand loyalty and influences purchase decisions, as consumers feel their choices align with broader sustainability goals.

The results from the purchase decision aspects reveal a profound alignment between consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing and their actual purchasing behaviors. Purchase Decision on Sustainability, with the highest score (4.73), indicates that sustainability is not just an attractive feature of the brand but a pivotal factor influencing consumer buying choices. This reflects the strong resonance of Uniqlo's sustainability efforts, which are effectively communicated to and perceived by consumers. When coupled with the high ratings in Information Regarding Sustainability (4.62) and Marketing Strategy (4.63), this suggests that Uniqlo has successfully cultivated an image of a responsible, eco-conscious brand. This perception is not just acknowledged but drives consumer behavior, signaling that sustainability is a key motivator behind the purchase decision-making process.

Furthermore, the high Alternative Evaluation score (4.65) demonstrates that, in comparison to other brands, Uniqlo is viewed more favorably, largely due to its sustainable practices. Consumers are not just passively receiving information about sustainability but are actively comparing brands and opting for Uniqlo as a result of its clearer commitment to environmental responsibility. This competitive advantage highlights the power of sustainability in shaping consumer preferences, signaling that consumers are increasingly scrutinizing the environmental impact of their choices and aligning themselves with brands that reflect their values.

The positive scores for Purchase Quantity (4.63) and Purchase Consistency (4.55) suggest that the sustainability messaging by Uniqlo fosters repeat purchases and encourages consumers to buy more frequently. This indicates that the perception of the brand's commitment to sustainability is deeply ingrained in consumer loyalty. Consumers who perceive Uniqlo's marketing strategies as genuine and effective are more likely to continue purchasing, not only due to product satisfaction but also because of alignment with their values regarding environmental sustainability. This reinforces the idea that consumers are increasingly making purchasing decisions with a sense of ethical responsibility, prioritizing brands that contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes.

Interestingly, the relatively lower score for Product Offering (4.48) in the consumer perception data may offer insight into why sustainability-focused purchase decisions, such as Purchase Intention (4.55), are still strong but not at the absolute highest. While consumers appreciate the brand's sustainability initiatives, there is an indication that there may be room for further integration of eco-friendly features into Uniqlo's products. For example, greater emphasis on using organic or recycled materials, more sustainable packaging, or transparency in production processes could enhance consumer perceptions of the products themselves, not just the brand as a whole. This presents an opportunity for Uniqlo to align its product offerings even more closely with its sustainability narrative, ensuring that both its marketing strategies and product characteristics reinforce each other seamlessly.

Moreover, the alignment between Purchase Intention (4.55) and Commitment to Marketing (4.51) suggests that the perception of Uniqlo's sustainability commitment plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' intentions to purchase. It indicates that consumers are not only receptive to the brand's sustainability messaging but are also actively inclined to translate that perception into future purchasing behavior. This relationship between perception and intention underscores the growing importance of sustainability in shaping the purchasing landscape, as consumers increasingly seek to support brands that align with their ethical values.

In sum, the result reveals a strong connection between consumer perceptions of Uniqlo's sustainable marketing and actual purchasing behaviors. The brand's ability to convey its commitment to sustainability effectively enhances its reputation, influences consumer decision-making, and cultivates long-term loyalty. The results indicate that sustainability is not merely a marketing trend but a core driver of consumer choices. As sustainability becomes a more prominent factor in consumer decision-making, Uniqlo is well-positioned to continue strengthening its market position by further integrating sustainable practices into both its marketing strategies and product offerings. By doing so, Uniqlo can solidify its standing as a leader in the sustainable fashion industry, meeting the demands of an increasingly environmentally-conscious consumer base.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study shows that Uniqlo's sustainable marketing efforts significantly influence consumer purchase decisions, with consumers perceiving the brand's commitment to sustainability as a key factor in their buying behavior. Uniqlo's sustainable marketing strategy is highly appreciated by consumers, positively influencing their behavior. The brand's

commitment to sustainability leads to greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, with sustainability values playing a crucial role in attracting and retaining consumers.

However, there is room for improvement in aligning product offerings more closely with eco-friendly practices. Uniqlo should focus on enhancing product sustainability, increasing transparency about its eco-friendly initiatives, and promoting sustainable product lines to strengthen consumer loyalty and further differentiate the brand in a competitive market.

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