The Impact of Sustainable Clothing Brand (UNIQLO) on the Implementation of SDG Number 13

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Abstract

This article discusses the efforts of the UNIQLO fashion brand in reducing waste materials as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNIQLO implements a sustainability campaign through its recycling project. This article describes how UNIQLO uses waste materials as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals using the Corporate Shared Value theory. In this case, it is promoting a recycling program that also provides shared value by selling sustainable products. This article uses a qualitative method, by collecting sources through journals, news, websites, and related articles.

Keywords

Sustainable, Corporate Shared Value Theory, fast fashion, UNIQLO, SDGs

Introduction

In the last decade, we can see an increase in textile waste. One of the factors is due to economic developments which resulted in the emergence of clothing sales (Nguy et al. 2021). By selling clothes in large quantities at low prices, fast fashion emerged as the dominant business model, causing garment consumption to skyrocket (Bick et al. 2018). Where, globally, about 56 million tons of clothing are purchased every year, and it is estimated that this will increase to 93 million tons in 2030 and 160 million tons in 2050 (BBC 2020). The thing that most people never consider and lack awareness of is that the impact of clothing on the environment is enormous. This can be proven by an estimated 92 million tonnes of textile waste globally every year and the equivalent of a garbage truck ending up in a landfill every second (BBC 2020).

Examine the environmental impact of reusing clothing from the reuse perspective and discover that reselling second-hand clothes may minimize the purchase of new garments, and reusing clothes can lessen the environmental impact. (Valverde et al. 2012) investigate textile waste management and propose reusing leftover textile fibers for heat insulation panels that may be used in the building industry. A review of second-hand clothes reuse reveals that reuse on a local level dominates, but online interchange will spread second-hand clothing reuse beyond regional boundaries. Investigate the carbon footprint of second-hand clothes reuse and create a "integrated solid waste management system" that incorporates relevant reuse enterprises, online exchange platforms, and traditional waste management channels. (Fortuna and Diyamandoglu 2017).

The need for sustainability in the general fashion sector is expanding due to the connection to the environment throughout the production stage, garment waste issues in rapid fashion, consumer desire for eco-friendly products, and company attitude changes. The importance of charting a course for the future of the fashion business is being underlined. Fast fashion brands must ensure that they grasp the consumer brand association network structure in terms of sustainable fashion because they are working on numerous sustainable fashions and marketing activities. Despite this, few studies have discovered brand connections for fast fashion brands committed to sustainability. (Camiciottoli et al. 2014)

Multiple media reports have stated that fast fashion is increasing environmental pollution (e.g., disposal of garment waste and the discharge of dyes and harmful chemicals) and ethical difficulties (e.g., overconsumption, unfair trade, and child labor exploitation). Consumer demand for sustainable fashion, free of resource depletion, environmental degradation, and ethical difficulties, has increased for fast fashion firms as customers become more aware of these issues in the fashion industry. As a result, quick fashion firms are aiming for long-term viability. (Hiller Connell 2011)

This is a wide notion that encompasses numerous parts of the manufacturing and consuming processes. Sustainable fashion is used interchangeably with several other terms, including sustainable clothes, green fashion, ethical fashion, and eco-fashion, all of which are frequently explained in terms of sustainability. Clothes made of recycled materials, vintage fashion, organic fashion, animal-friendly fashion, handcraft fashion, custom-made fashion, locally produced apparel, and fair trade fashion are all examples of sustainable fashion. (Shen et al. 2013)

Sustainability and green supply chain management are very important for business operations nowadays. United Nations' new sustainable development agenda for 2030 has come into force since 2016, which initiates 17 <u>sustainable development goals</u> (SDGs). The SDGs well demonstrate the new objectives of economic, social and environmental developments, such as ending poverty, economic growth, environmental protection and so on. SDGs call for everyone in the world to contribute to the goals, including governments, companies, civil organizations and the public. From the private sector, it is reported that sustainable business can bring up to US\$ 12 trillion in economic opportunities. (*Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals* 2020)

By 2030, it is estimated that overall more than 134 million tonnes of textiles will be wasted annually. The fashion industry that drives textile waste is fast fashion (EcoTechnology 2017). Industrial fashion or fashion uses the contemporary term "fast fashion" to describe clothing collections that are based on the latest fashion trends but are produced in an inexpensive way and with fast production times and short distribution (Roozen & Raedts 2020). This affects customer culture and buying behavior which makes them buy more clothes regardless of their needs (Muthu 2019).

Moreover, this resulted in a highly globalized fast fashion industry wherein, the supply chain became international, which in turn pushed garment construction textile manufacturing to cheaper labor areas in developing countries (Bick et al. 2018). Occupational hazards during fast fashion production are also a concern. Work and safety standards in low-income countries are often not enforced because of poor political infrastructure and organizational management. For example, respiratory hazards due to poor ventilation such as cotton dust and synthetic air particulates, and musculoskeletal hazards from repetitive motion tasks (Bick et al. 2018).

Furthermore, the numerous reports of accidents, such as the 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse that killed 1134 Bangladeshi workers, are a clear reminder of the health hazards faced by garment workers (Bick et al. 2018). Thus, with the reports of accidents, it has not been proven to change the safety standards for workers in developing countries or low-income countries. and environmental equity at every stage in the global supply chain is particularly challenging. However, today's big brands in the fashion industry are starting to take notice of the demand for more sustainable practices (BBC 2020). Where global environmental justice will be on innovation in cultural development, company development, trade policies, and consumer habits (Bick et al. 2018).

Nowadays, some controversies around fast fashion in terms of sustainability are reported. Since fast fashion has created fast-speed disposal, this directly yields tremendous waste generation and imposes high pressure on the environment. Due to the external pressure, sustainable measures have been taken by fashion brands (Biswas et al. 2018).

In addition, to the goal of generating profit, it is the responsibility of the community to improve the quality of life of community members, provide welfare and contribute to the economy while protecting the environment and natural resources (Ghasemi & Nazemi 2014). Thus, fast fashion is currently starting to lead to practices based on philosophical ideals centered on values, such as good working conditions and reducing environmental damage

(Pookulangara & Shephard 2013). And by the agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which respond to the long-term development of society, namely 17 goals and 169 targets (United Nations 2022b). These goals that are appropriate to guide governments and companies to better understand global and improve economic well-being, and social and environmental issues are goals number 8 (Accepted Consumption and Production), and 13 (Climate Change Countermeasures).

There are important goals for the introduction of sustainable development in international companies because now there has been an increase in the attention of countries to socio-economic problems, and the environment and companies are starting to compete for leadership positions in the market (Spiridonova 2020). To overcome this problem, one of the fast fashion brands that have tried to produce their clothes sustainably is UNIQLO. UNIQLO is a clothing brand from Japan that was founded in 1949.

UNIQLO's head office is in Tokyo, Japan. Today, UNIQLO is in 20 countries and has 2260 stores worldwide (Australia, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Macau, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Canada, India, USA and United Kingdom (Fast Retailing, 2019). Uniqlo positions itself as a socially responsible brand and implements a sustainable mission statement "Unlocking the Power of Clothing" which means that clothing can change the world for the better with the aim of harmony, sustainable natural resource management, and responsible development of human potential, focusing on the planet, people, and community (Spiridonova 2020).

1.1 Objectives

This research was conducted to find out how the CSR UNIQLO combat the climate change with their program, to join the UN SDG number 13 (Climate Change).

RQ: How does UNIQLO use leftover materials as part of the SDG's Climate Change with CSV theory?

2.Literature Review



The concept behind CSV is to incorporate social issues into the capitalistic economic process in order to increase benefits for both company and society, allowing for the reconciliation of the two divided realms. Porter and Kramer proposed three strategies for businesses to produce shared value: a) rethinking products and markets, b) rethinking efficiency in the value chain, and c) local cluster growth. Since its start, CSV has reached many corporate leaders ears, giving them with a lens through which to interpret social challenges as opportunities for growth (Junge 2011)

Nowadays, many people, particularly in the fashion business, are beginning to notice and comprehend the challenges of sustainability and environmental protection. Adoption of sustainable development can occur at global, national, regional, and corporate levels. Based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, each government sets its national targets taking into account the national content and context. The involvement of responsible corporations in this agenda by carrying out social responsibility has become a priority issue on the government's agenda (Kim 2018). The sustainable practice of fast fashion is closely related to the 8th Sustainable Development Goal, which requires countries, including businesses, to improve the efficiency of production and consumption of resources progressively. Where there is a close relationship between the economy and the use of natural resources, and where it is necessary to separate economic progress and quality of life from resource utilization (Lenzen et al. 2021).

Full and productive employment and decent labor for all women and men, including youth and persons with disabilities, as well as a fair reward for equal effort, are expected to considerably reduce the number of women with disabilities by 2030. Youth unemployment, education or training, labor rights protection, and supporting a safe and secure working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, particularly female migrants and insecure employment, are all priorities (United Nations 2022). Companies must also bridge the gap by paying garment workers a living wage. As a result, the fast fashion industry is currently attempting to develop ethical employment practices and policies in recruitment, training, and management, as well as involvement with work-related stakeholders, similar to that of Adidas. (Spiridonova 2020).

The fashion supply chain is a textile and clothing industry-specific supply chain that is distinguished by labor-intensive production, a long value chain, and a relatively high level of pollution. In comparison to other sectors' supply networks From an economic and social standpoint, the global industry benefits from cheap labor costs in developing nations such as Cambodia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. The Rana Plaza factory disaster in Bangladesh exposes the major socioeconomic issues concealed in the TA sector, raising public awareness about worker rights, health and safety, remuneration, and so on. From an environmental standpoint, the TA business causes significant pollutants. Meanwhile, enormous amounts of materials (such as cotton, linen, wool, and so on), energy (such as electricity), and water are consumed. The effluent contains a variety of harmful compounds, particularly during the dyeing process. If rivers and streams are not adequately managed, they become severely polluted (*The Environmental Cost of Clothes* 2011)

With increased consumer awareness of being environmentally friendly and socially responsible, sustainable retailing and consumption is a prerequisite in sustainable Fashion supply chain management to suit the consumers' changing expectations and preferences (Jacobs et al., 2018). From the retailer's point of view, (Choi and Chiu 2012) investigate the sustainability challenges in fashion retailing using the "mean-downside-risk" and "mean-variance" models. (Shen and Li 2015)

The 12th United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, which calls for sustainable consumption and production, appears to be tied to UNIQLO's sustainable goal. In recent decades, environmental deterioration and social conflict have put civilization under substantial strain, with population increase and rising consumption per capita serving as the primary drivers. The pressure culminated in September 2015, when 193 countries accepted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, sometimes known as the "Global Goals." As new sustainability challenges emerge, it is becoming clear that the sustainable development agenda is as important for developed countries as it is for the private sector. As large corporate sales exceed the GDP of many countries and their supply chains span the globe, the private sector plays a critical role in achieving global sustainability — both environmentally and socially. In the case of fast fashion, the UN's 12th SDG ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns and seeks to remedy injustices caused by unfettered materialism (Bick et al. 2018)

Next up is the UN's 13th Sustainable Development Goal, namely Handling Climate Change. Where global climate change has emerged as one of the most pressing issues confronting the world economy and politics. Overconsumption and quick fashion are bad for the environment, especially the climate. (Spiridonova, 2020). One example of the bad impact of fast fashion on climate change is transportation. The transportation referred to is the transportation of goods such as air cargo, trucks, trains, pipelines, and intermodal terminals. Each means of transportation affects the environment in various fields. The resulting environmental threat is air pollution, which arises from air transportation and roads. Therefore, UNIQLO has committed to the issue of climate change by acting to promote a better environment together (Uniqlo 2022). In Ghasemi and Nazemi's (2014) article, they explain what steel companies in practice, in accordance with the Development Goals Sustainability number 13.

First, have an environmental management system, reduce consumption of energy and natural resources, waste reduction, and recycling management. Besides, In addition, communication of the company's environmental policy with employees, suppliers, contractors, consumers, and other stakeholder groups in committing to continuous improvement in environmental performance. So, UNIQLO can practice the same thing in acting on climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals can be used as an impactful instrument to move towards a new business model and at the same time, be able to represent the canvas for a shift to new sustainable growth that aims to reduce risks, increase benefits to economic systems, and organizations, and create new opportunities for innovation, reputation, and efficiency improvement (Izzo et al. 2020).

Destination Sustainability Development is a key element of purposeful action to drive sustainable value creation in the fast-fashion industry (Garcia-Torres et al. 2017). In this regard, the SDGs have been described by a collection of literature on emerging professional and academic challenges for business organizations and investors (Izzo et al. 2020). Therefore, the mission as part of the plan national and sectoral, sustainable business practices, consumer behavior and reduction, and the abolition of fast fashion, should be the target of global environmental justice advocates. Successful implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals requires complementary and collective action of policymakers, businesses, and civil society (Lenzen et al. 2021).

3. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on secondary data with the CSV Theory tools. To find out How Uniqlo deals with Fast Fashion waste nowadays. This article uses a qualitative method, by collecting sources through journals, news, websites, and related articles.

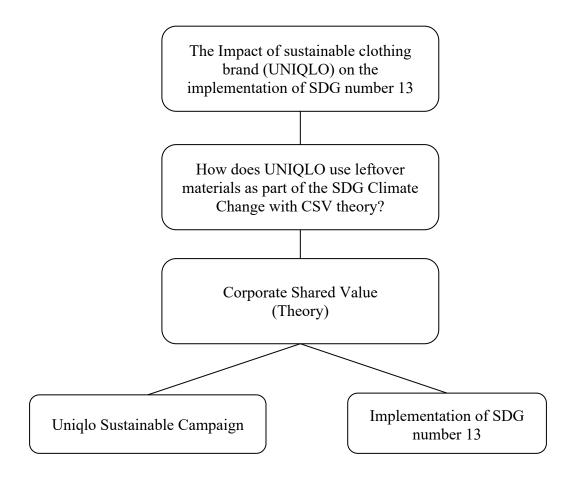


Figure 1. Methodology Diagram

4. Data Collection

This research paper focuses on secondary data to introduce the situation and condition of the Fast Fashion industry in the context of CSR and to know they implement their program to SDG number 13th to support the argument of this study.

5. Results and Discussion Creating Shared Value Concept

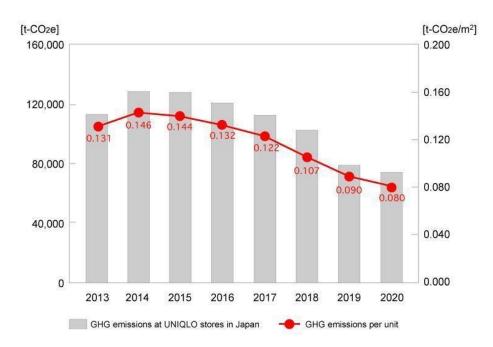


Figure 2. Statistics of GHG Emissions at UNIQLO Stores in Japan **Source:** Response to Climate Change, https://www.fastretailing.com/eng/sustainability/environment/climatechange.html

Fast Retailing employs the Higg Index and other apparel industry indices at our main garment factories and fabric mills to measure and reduce environmental impact throughout the supply chain. Participating manufacturers in our program for fabric mills to minimize energy and water usage (UNIQLO Responsible Mill Program) met targets to cut energy consumption by 10% of 2016 levels by the end of 2020. The project lasted three years, from 2018 to 2020, We conducted facility energy assessments to identify GHG reduction potential and discussed with factories the need to formulate plans with initiatives such as energy savings, sourcing renewable electricity, and shifting to low-carbon energy to achieve our reduction target by fiscal 2030, focusing on our core fabric mills.

And Fast Retailing aims to reduce absolute GHG emissions from its own operations, such as stores and headquarters, by 90% by fiscal 2030 from a fiscal 2019 baseline, and absolute GHG emissions from raw materials, fabric, and garment production* by 20% during the same time period. We also pledge to obtain 100 percent renewable energy by fiscal 2030. The Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) approved these targets as science-based targets (SBTs), and they are commensurate with the amount of decarbonization required to satisfy the Paris Agreement goals. We intend to step up our efforts to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. (FAST RETAILING CO., LTD., 2022 Climate Change Response)

Unresolved persistent social problems and the urgency of global difficulties like climate change, the repercussions of which appear to be getting closer by the day, have led to an increasing number of people paying more attention to these issues. Clamorous incidents of inappropriate business activity and natural disasters associated with poor risk management practice have undoubtedly contributed to the widespread notion that business gains at the expense of society. Clamorous incidents of inappropriate business activity and natural disasters associated with poor risk management practice have undoubtedly contributed to the widespread notion that business gains at the expense of society. Given the circumstances, Porter and Kramer developed the notion of Creating Shared Value, which states that corporations may solve societal problems profitably.

Kim (2018) argues that companies nowadays are battling global public pressure to contribute to the world's sustainable development. So there's the idea of generating shared value. Creating Shared Value (CSV) is a compelling notion that can push businesses to reconsider their approach to social and environmental issues (Epstein-Reeves, 2012). This is because, in recent years, the business has come to be viewed as a major source of social, environmental, and economic problems (M. E. Porter & Kramer 2018). The company is widely considered to be prosperous at the expense of the general public. According to Porter & Kramer (2018), the solution lies in the principle of shared value, which involves creating economic value that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges. CSV contributes to sustainable business goals by emphasizing the relationship between business strategy and social goals (Kim 2018).

CSV has been heavily criticized and is often confused with the phrase "Corporate Social responsibilities" (CSR). Rather, CSV is a strategy to develop the market future while strengthening the economy, markets, communities, and corporate coffers (Epstein-Reeves, 2012). CSV was created by Porter and Kramer in 2011 as "a more sophisticated type of capitalism," in which the ability to overcome social challenges is intrinsic to profit maximization rather than being thought of as an afterthought. Shared values can be developed in three ways, (1) by redefining products and markets, (2) by redefining productivity in the value chain, and (3) by facilitating local cluster development, with cluster development being very important (P. M. E. Porter 2011).

We can observe that these phases are completely compatible with the quality of the four determinants of the diamond model: (1) factor conditions, (2) demand conditions, (3) enabling conditions, and (4) competitive conditions, by reorienting the three steps and adding one more step. (5) Factor conditions are handled by defining re-productivity in the value chain, demand conditions are handled by reimagining products and markets, enabling conditions are addressed by enabling the development of local clusters, and competitive conditions are handled with a new step added for determining core competencies (Michael Porter 1990).

Suppose you look at the application of CSV for the SDG's mission. In that case, there are no related studies that discuss the concept of CSV as a sustainability campaign effort for the Uniqlo fast fashion brand. However, I think implementing UNIQLO's sustainability campaign is good for economic progress as well as environmental protection, and can be referred to from the CSV concept. As seen in a related study by Porter and Kramer, discuss that shared value focuses companies on profits that also create social benefits rather than reducing them.

6. Conclusion

Because of the massive greenhouse gases and heavy use of water and resources during the manufacturing process, clothing and footwear manufacturing accounted for approximately 8% of worldwide anthropogenic pollution in 2016. The effect of garment manufacturing on climate change grew by 35% between 2005 and 2016, and it is expected to rise gradually in 2020 and 2030 if the existing business situation prevails in the majority of businesses. Climate change is caused by an increase in per capita consumption and a move to synthetic fibers, which are derived from oil and are particularly energy-intensive. Climate change, freshwater loss, resource depletion, ecosystem quality, and human health are all affected by this trend.

The impact of fast fashion that is currently emerging on the implementation of the 8th, 12th, and 13th points of the Sustainable Development Goals, where the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations, is an initiative to develop sustainable development. In this case, UNIQLO tries to sell its products to add value to the company and also tries to reduce the amount of waste that exists, by Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling the company's products. The UNIQLO campaign not only discusses the welfare of the surrounding environment but also discusses gender equality and the welfare of its workers. It can be concluded that the UNIQLO company is trying to sell its products to add value to the company, and also they are trying to reduce the amount of waste that exists, by reusing, reducing, and recycling the company's products.

The CSV concept, namely the principle of shared value, involves creating economic value that also creates value for society by overcoming its needs and challenges. CSV will provide economic prospects and provide benefits for both foreign and domestic communities, as well as collaborate with other groups, both domestic and international. UNIQLO's sustainability campaign can be explained using the CSV concept. Where fast fashion, namely UNIQLO puts forward a recycling program that also provides shared value by selling sustainable products.

This research is very useful to encourage further research. Especially in the development of production methods that prioritize values such as those contained in the SDGs. Especially research that uses CSV theory, so from this it is hoped that it can help reduce the use of materials and also the excessive production caused by the fast fashion industry.

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Biography

Farrel Ardhan currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Bina Nusantara University majoring in International Relations. he participated in several external activities such as being a project manager in Trmpolin Studio. he also has completed several intern programs in the Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Transportation Indonesia.

Roseno Aji Affandi is a lecturer in International Relations at Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia. Mr. Roseno earned a bachelor's degree in Management Economics at the Islamic University of Indonesia, a Master's Degree in Management at Gajah Mada University, and a Doctorate in International Relations at Padjadjaran University. Issues regarding multinational corporations (MNCs), international political economy (IPE), MNC business strategy, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are his specialties. In 2020, Mr. Roseno has conducted a number of researches with his colleagues related to the themes he masters, such as diplomacy and economics in Asia. In 2021, he also participated in several activities to devote himself to the community by attending workshops, seminars, and training.