

LCMB7020

Dissertation

Topic: Analysing the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for brand reputation in the UK: A case study of Unilever

Abstract

Background: Sustainability formed an essential aspect for business organisation toward improvement of brand image and reputations among customers. Over the last few years, customers within the FMCG sector portrayed more inclination towards sustainability-driven business activities. As a results, brands implemented more focus towards transformation of their business and marketing activities into sustainable operation.

Purpose and Aim: This dissertation study effectively served the purpose of analysing the effectiveness of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for business organisations. This research study effectively achieved its aim of understanding and evaluating the significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for Unilever on its brand reputation within the FMCG sector.

Methods used: The study incorporated qualitative secondary data collection process with effective thematic analysis. The secondary data collection process was conducted through incorporation of secondary company reports, newspaper articles and government reports.

Findings: The findings highlighted positive significance of sustainability-driven marketing activities of the company on its brand reputation within the marketplace.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Sustainability forms an essential aspect towards the development of brand reputation within the marketplace. Organisations mainly focus on the incorporation of sustainability across all aspects of business operations (Gong *et al.*, 2023). In the light of the above context, the report of Retail Times (2023), portrayed those customers exhibited more loyalty towards brands that promoted sustainability within their business operations. As a result, the emergence of sustainable marketing campaigns that focused on the promotion of sustainability aspects emerged as an essential context within the marketing activities of business organisations. This certainly contradicted the traditional marketing activities of business organisations. Traditional marketing activities mainly focused on promotional offers and discounts to enhance brand reputation for business organisations (De Vries *et al.*, 2017). However, the inclination of customer preferences towards sustainability certainly propelled business organisations to focus on the development of sustainable marketing campaigns. According to a NielsenIQ report, 61 percent of UK consumers preferred sustainability as an essential aspect that influenced their purchase decision-making processes (Retail Times, 2023). To attract these customer bases within the UK, the development of sustainable marketing campaigns that reflected sustainable business operations formed an emerging concern for UK businesses. Eventually, the market strategy report undertaken by Uceda (2022), highlighted that British organisations at the present moment invested approximately €10,000 annually to strategise marketing activities with sustainability. Therefore, understanding the significance of sustainable marketing campaigns to improve brand reputation formed an essential context to study for UK based business organisations.

1.2 Organisational Background

Unilever Plc can be portrayed as a British multinational company. The company was established in the year 1929 and operates within the fast-moving consumer goods sector (Unilever, 2024). The headquarters of the company is located in London, UK and the company owns multiple brands like Dove, Axe, Ben and Jerry's ice cream and many more (Unilever, 2024). Sustainability forms an essential aspect of the business organisation. Unilever PLC incorporated a wide range of sustainability aspects within their business operations and the company effectively promoted their sustainability aspects through different kinds of marketing campaigns on social media platforms (Unilever, 2024). In 2022, Unilever increased its sustainable marketing spend by €500 million (Campaign Live, 2023). Therefore, understanding

the importance of sustainability marketing campaigns on the brand reputation of Unilever plc formed an essential topic to study.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

This research study aimed to critically analyse and evaluate the significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns to effectively enhance the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the UK market.

In accordance with the above research aim, four major research objectives were derived. The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To evaluate the significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for Unilever Plc in terms of improving the brand reputation among UK consumers.
- To recognise different ways through which Unilever framed their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and their impact on their brand reputation.
- To recognise and analyse different challenges faced by Unilever Plc during the implementation of sustainable marketing campaigns and the way it impacted brand reputation.
- To recommend different strategic ways through which the challenges faced by Unilever Plc within sustainable marketing practices can be addressed effectively.

1.3 Research Questions

Central Research Question: What significance can be derived through the effective implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns on the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the UK market?

Sub Research Questions:

Research Question 1: How have sustainability-driven marketing campaigns influenced the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the UK market?

Research Question 2: Through what ways sustainability-driven marketing campaigns were incorporated within the marketing activities of Unilever Plc?

Research Question 3: What were the major challenges that the company faced during the implementation of sustainable marketing campaigns and the way it impacted brand reputation?

Research Question 4: What strategies can be recommended to address the challenges faced by Unilever during the implementation of sustainable marketing campaigns?

1.4 Research Rationale

Unilever operates within the fast moving consumer goods sector of the UK. According to a recent study, 53 percent of the shoppers highlighted that they were inclined towards brands that

focused on sustainability within their business operations in the EU and UK fast moving consumer goods sector. Unilever being a multinational brand, excessively depends on brand reputation to gain competitive advantage within the marketplace (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Thus, analysis of the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever can help to better understand the role of this marketing strategy towards the improvement of the brand reputation of the company within the marketplace. This formed the major rationale behind the selection of this research topic.

1.5 Research Scope

The scope of this research encompassed an understanding of different sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and their impact on the brand reputation of Unilever. The study certainly explored different sustainable marketing strategies of Unilever and analysed the way it impacted the brand image of the company. Moreover, the scope of the study extended to understand different challenges that brands like Unilever faced during the effective implementation of sustainability-driven marketing strategies within the marketplace. The scope of the study was restricted to the sustainability aspects of the business and did not include other different aspects of marketing. However, the behaviour of consumers towards sustainability aspects of business operations was incorporated within this study.

1.6 Dissertation structure

The dissertation will have the following structure throughout

Chapter 1- Introduction: This chapter has been the representation of the purpose, objectives and motive behind the conduction of this study. The main idea and encouragement behind the explorations of this study have been provided in detail in the first section of this research.

Chapter 2- Literature Review: This chapter has presented the explorations of existing literature and its synthesis critically to develop an understanding of varying approaches and perceptions of different authors regarding the research topic. The contradiction between the perspectives of authors has been presented to develop thematic and contextual knowledge of the topic.

Chapter 3- Methodology: This chapter has presented the manner in which methods have been selected and applied to drive maximum value for the findings of this research. The demonstration of choosing the most appropriate methods has been done in this section.

Chapter 4- Findings: This chapter highlighted the findings developed from the data collection process. Findings related to the sustainability-driven marketing of Unilever and its impact were portrayed and interpreted within this chapter. Thematic analysis was conducted within this chapter. Themes were developed and analysed in accordance with the research context.

Chapter 5- Discussion: This chapter effectively discussed the results derived from the data collection process. The results interpreted within the findings chapter were discussed in accordance with the research questions and objectives. Moreover, the findings developed from the data collection process were supported by the information reviewed within the literature review chapter.

Chapter 6- Conclusion and Recommendation: This chapter has provided an overview of the research along with a specified understanding that has been developed from the research. Recommendations for the effective implementation of sustainability have also been made in this section after the development of an in-depth understanding.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter includes a review of the past literature on the topic of sustainability-driven marketing and how it is related to the enhancement of brand reputation. It contains a discussion of the various aspects of the research objectives. Through the help of different journals and authors' perspectives, a well-defined review of the literature is conducted in the chapter. Additionally, it includes the theories related to the topic to develop a proper base for the research. The literature gap has been identified in the research which would help to continue the research in the right direction. Furthermore, a conceptual framework has been created in the chapter related to the aim of the research.

2.2 The concept of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns

According to Sakalasooriya (2021), sustainability is a continuous process which is used to maintain the capacity of the ecological and social systems. It allows the maintenance of the social system while improving the quality of the ecological system. As per Kemper and Ballantine, (2019), sustainability has entered into many disciplines and marketing is no exception as well. The concept of sustainability marketing is the product of an agenda related to sustainability in the last few decades. The author further explains that the use of sustainable marketing means the process of marketing the products of any organisation in a manner which allows the customer and organisational needs to be met while being compatible with the ecosystem. This allows the organisation to show the market that they are sustainable and have produced the required products which are not harmful to nature. Sustainability-driven marketing has become crucial for organisations all around the world. On the other hand, Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021) have the opinion that sustainable marketing has slowly started to take centre stage in corporate practice. There are several factors which are responsible for the development of sustainability-driven marketing. The authors suggest that people all around the world have noticed the scientific evidence of climate change and huge economic inequalities. Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021) further add that governments have also taken the required initiatives to be more sustainable. As public concern is growing all around the world, corporate marketers have taken action to follow social and environmental standards. To be able to promote these steps and actions there is a need for marketing and hence sustainability-driven marketing has increased.

On the other hand, Pooja, Shirin and Sujata, (2022) found that there are two different schools of thought regarding sustainability. One of them believes that marketing and sustainability are different and cannot go hand in hand. The reason is that the concept of marketing encourages

consumption and sustainability discourages it. Another school of thought explains that innovative and creative marketing solutions can increase sustainability among consumers (Pooja, Shirin and Sujata, 2022). There are contradicting opinions, however, it cannot be denied that in recent times, there has been a huge increase in the use of sustainability marketing. As per Kortam and Mahrous (2020), sustainability marketing aims at integrating productivity and efficiency by exchanging the required resources with other resources which are less harmful to the ecosystem. It is essential to understand that most businesses have started to incorporate sustainability in their business strategy. Hence it is essential that they also start to communicate about it to make society more aware.

2.3 Importance of Brand Reputation

The term "brand reputation" refers to one of the key assets of a company which simply means its internal behaviour, how customers look into the organisation, and the ways they are engaged. Basically, brand reputation represents the perception and overall sentiment that potential customers, stakeholders, and common people obtain about a brand. Therefore, Nocke and Strausz (2023) have defined brand reputation as collective public perception that includes customers, employees, and partners and evaluates how it positively or negatively impacts them. It is important to maintain a brand reputation by a company to influence its people, especially its consumer groups so that they can hold a positive thought regarding the brand and buy products and services. As stated by Vuong and Bui (2023) a positive brand reputation serves as a strong differentiator in a competitive market. The statement is undoubtedly true as in this rising competitive market, brand reputation plays a significant role as part of marketing strategy and retains customers. For example, a company which sells products similar to other brands at the same price, but when one of them prioritises customer preferences and behaves well with their customers, it automatically increases the brand reputation of that particular brand.

As argued by Ahmadi and Ataei (2022) brand reputation stretches beyond consumer loyalty as it influences people like investors, partners, and other involved stakeholders. This statement of the author reflects that brand reputation is positively related to emotional attachment and it has an indirect impact on brand advocacy. Therefore, it can be mentioned that brand reputation has multidimensional facts in sustaining organisational profitability, growth, and consumer retention policies. On the other hand, Voordt and Jensen (2023) argued that brand reputation is not only important to retain customers, it also influences the employees as well and it allows them to think whether they would work there for a prolonged time or not. For example, an organisation operates its business following an autocratic leadership style wherein employees

are not recognised or valued, the employees will not be satisfied and employee turnover issues will persist.

As per the view of Le (2023), today's generation is mostly involved with social media and a brand reputation circulates through these channels. Thus, a company needs to follow proper behaviour, maintain the quality of products, and above all their organisational behaviour must be positive toward their customers. In this context, Motalo et al. (2023) have conveyed that brand reputation directly influences a company's market position and indicates competitive advantage. A brand's positive reputations help the company to reach the maximum number of people and their cooperation increases their market sustainability.

2.4 Ways Sustainability-driven Marketing campaigns are Performed by contemporary organisations

As per Richardson (2022), there has been a use of different types and forms of models so that organisations can implement sustainability in strategic marketing practices. The authors state that the use of segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) seems to be the most effective way an organisation can implement sustainability marketing campaigns. The use of sustainable segmentation is very important with the use of sustainable marketing. It allows organisations to recognise how and which customers would react to sustainability issues (Richardson, 2022). There is also a need for organisations to consider stakeholders and understand the implications of the sustainability agenda. A contemporary organisation has to understand the different customer bases and recognise which segment would react to sustainable marketing strategies. Contemporary organisations generally segment the market to understand the customer base. This allows them to be more effective with the sustainability drive marketing campaign as they can be customised to target that specific customer base. On the other hand, Jung and Kim (2023) marketers in different organisations have been designing products that are more sustainable as well as in a way that the consumers are willing to buy. In the current period, through a better understanding of the market need and marketing skills, organisations have been able to normalise the consumption or purchase of sustainable featured products. This approach is led by a strategy of developing customer-related sustainable product design. In this approach, sustainable marketing generally focuses on the producer instead of the market itself (Jung and Kim, 2023). The use of certain strategies has different impacts on the market. Organisations generally use strategies or methods that align with their needs and requirements. In the opinion of Andronie *et al.* (2019), the application of sustainable marketing or green marketing is possible through the help of big data. In recent times organisations have been using and incorporating big data as the cutting-edge marketing information in green marketing.

The use of big data provides a different and new perspective in different fields. However, it comes with the issue of privacy of the customers (Andronie *et al.* 2019). However, it has become essential that there is a use of big data among the strategies developed by the organisation for green marketing. It provides the organisation with a view of different segments of the market and customers. On the other, some organisations are partnering up with third parties or external organisations for sustainable marketing. As per Park *et al.* (2022), companies have to develop good relationships with external parties such as NGOs, governmental organisations, and universities. This helps in the increase of brand loyalty and trust among customers. The organisation further uses social media as a way to communicate with the market and customers. Park *et al.* (2022) state that there is a need for organisations to communicate with the public and social media helps in that regard. Without the efforts from the organisations in marketing, the organisations would not be able to promote their social, economic, ecological and moral aims to the public.

On a similar note, Dash, Sharma and Sharma (2023) have the opinion that organisations are using social media marketing for their products and services. To be more specific, the use of social media influencers (SMIs) has become increasingly popular in recent times. It has reached a point where organisations have to use and develop digital and social media-based marketing. The role of social media in the development of sustainable marketing strategies is essential at the current time. Likewise, Alkhatib, Kecskés and Keller (2023) have the opinion that there has been an increase in the usage of technology specifically since the pandemic happened. Digital marketing which uses electronic devices to reach customers through digital communication has become an essential part of green marketing (Alkhatib, Kecskés and Keller, 2023). The authors add that the use of digital marketing has become crucial to reach potential customers and convince them to buy products. It has become essential to understand the needs of the customers and also to promote their sustainable products to a wider audience.

2.5 Significance and impact of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns in improving brand reputation

According to Anuradha *et al.* (2023), there is a need for organisations to become sustainable as it enhances brand recognition and competitive edge. When an organisation uses sustainability marketing, it leads to them being able to earn trust and faith in the customers. Some customers only buy products which are produced by organisations that adhere to environmental measures. When an organisation can develop a good amount of brand recognition it also generates faith and trust in the organisation increasing the brand reputation in the market. On a similar note, Gong *et al.* (2023) state that sustainable marketing does lead

to organisations having a better brand perception and consumer attitude. The United Nations (UN) has been exerting force to complete the Sustainable Development Goals. Organisations have started marketing initiatives which have aim to meet the organisational goal through the help of environmental protection, cultural promotion and disaster aid (Gong *et al.* 2023). Through the help of sustainable marketing, organisations can think of long-term development rather than stopping at short-term development. As a result, sustainable marketing promotes a favourable brand reputation among customers due to its initiatives. When the customers start to perceive the organisation as a trusted brand due to its long-term stability in the market using sustainable marketing, their brand reputation automatically receives a positive response.

As per Khandai *et al.* (2023), the use of sustainable marketing has a major positive influence on brand trust. An increased trust in a brand lead to increased brand reputation and loyalty. It is essential to understand that to build a brand reputation, there is a need for the organisation to have a better brand trust in the market. Khandai *et al.* (2023) state that with the increased changes in the consumption habits among customers they are trying to fulfil ideological and symbolic needs instead of just focusing on rational needs. On a similar note, Tanveer *et al.* (2021) state that marketing aspects like packaging and branding affect the affection and trust of the customers. The use of proper packaging allows the customers to understand the communication the organisation is trying to convey. The organisation needs to have a strong relationship with the customer. Sustainable packaging allows for the development of that communication and enhances the brand reputation as the customers can connect with the brand itself. However, sometimes when an organisation tries too hard to use sustainable marketing, the organisation can fall into the trap of greenwashing. As per Lopes, Gomes and Trancoso, (2023), greenwashing refers to the marketing practice when an organisation tends to present a product as sustainably responsible when it is not. This develops a bad reputation for the organisation among the customers in the market. The organisation must try to stay true to its customer base without faking or providing false information to the customers. Tanveer *et al.* (2021) explained that ethical marketing is important to gain trust and faith in the customer. Greenwashing can be extremely hard on the brand reputation of any organisation. It can be stated that the brand's reputation can be impacted by the use of sustainable marketing. The use of sustainable marketing has a major significance on brand reputation. When the organisation uses it effectively, it increases or has a positive impact on the brand's reputation. However, when used in an unethical manner like greenwashing, it hurts the brand's reputation, hence, the organisation has to be careful with the use of sustainable marketing.

2.6 Challenges related to sustainability marketing

Classical literature emphasises the correlation between brand reputation, brand image, and brand knowledge as it asserts that the influence of a brand reputation is considered to be the most potent in a market with high competition. Market sustainability depends on the management system of a company, internal factors as well as financial conditions, and market competitiveness. As opined by Grijalvo and García-Wang (2023), when the pursuit of sustainability is considerable, it comes with a set of challenges that sometimes affect marketing drivers and the most significant challenge can be mentioned as greenwashing. Greenwashing takes place when a business entity exaggerates or falsely claims its products to be environment-friendly, creating a temporary impact on consumer groups. However, this type of organisational behaviour does not last long and it gradually affects their brand reputation. As a result, sustainable marketing strategies disrupted that negative impact on productivity, profitability, and sustainability of the company.

As identified by Lebo and Mandagi (2023) consumers' expectations are becoming increasingly conscious of environmental and social issues. Modern customers are focused on buying products from brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability but failing to provide these impacts negatively. For example, some food processing companies use natural ingredients but sometimes they might use plastics for packaging, and that creates biases in their sustainability practices. As a result, the consumers are also forced to think about the brand and their behaviour. This can be another challenge for maintaining a brand reputation by following all criteria of marketing sustainability. As illustrated by Rector et al. (2023) sustainability is a complex concept that creates issues in measuring the impacts of sustainable marketing efforts. Metrics and standards for measuring sustainability always fluctuate and vary making it challenging to identify effectiveness.

Consumer education and knowledge are a significant factor in maintaining sustainable marketing. As stated by Jansen et al. (2023) when consumers lack a deep understanding of environmental issues that impact their preferences it directly hits sustainability. Persuading consumers to invest in environment-friendly alternatives at a higher cost poses difficulties, specifically in a market where price sensitivity is considered to be paramount. As stated by Brand et al. (2023) educating specific consumer communities regarding the benefits of sustainable products, their lifestyles, and the wider environmental context needs strategic communication campaigns. It is challenging to make people aware as their personal perspectives do not match with others in society. For example, some people may think practising sustainability is not always beneficial as utilisation of recyclable products seems to

be costly. Therefore, the educational aspect of the consumer is crucial for fostering a real understanding of sustainability among targeted audiences.

On the other hand, global supply chain-related complexities present challenges in marketing sustainability. As illustrated by Salam and Bajaba (2023) supply chain plays a crucial role in marketing, based on which the whole process runs, in terms of sustaining the product's supply. Ensuring the sustainability of the whole supply chain, from sourcing raw materials to manufacturing and distribution seems to be challenging. The challenges initially impact global supply chain networks and sustainability which directly and indirectly influence organisational productivity as well. As argued by Salam and Bajaba (2023) regulatory uncertainties sometimes create challenges. The absence of standardised regulations governing sustainability claims may lead an organisation to inconsistency in communicating with stakeholders. In contrast to this, Silva et al. (2023) have commented that measuring and reporting sustainability performance in marketing is a common challenge faced by an organisation. It is evident that developing suitable metrics to assess the environmental and social impacts of products and services needs robust methodologies.

2.7 Strategies for overcoming the issues associated with sustainability marketing in relation to brand reputation

In the field of sustainability-driven marketing, overcoming challenges is important to create a positive impact on sustaining brand reputation. The cornerstone of effective sustainability-driven marketing lies in authenticity. It is imperative for companies to authentically adopt sustainable practices, avoiding mere surface-level greenwashing. Trust is forged through authenticity, and consumers tend to favour brands that genuinely commit to environmental responsibility, fostering a genuine connection with their audience. As stated by Kurek et al. (2023) innovation in product design and development can set a brand apart, developing sustainable products and services with unique features, enhanced durability, or innovative eco-friendly materials not only aligns with consumer values but also positions the brand holds. Ensuring transparency in supply chain practices is crucial for brands dedicated to sustainability. Offering insight into the origins, production, and distribution processes reassures consumers that the entire supply chain upholds ethical and environmentally responsible standards. Being candid about obstacles and ongoing efforts for improvement adds an extra layer of openness, contributing to an enhanced sense of transparency.

Different Corporate Social Responsibilities and community development programs address societal issues in the marketing sector. As per the view of Wallach and Popovich (2023) extending sustainability efforts to social responsibility initiatives and community engagement

strengthens a brand's value or its reputation. To establish a brand's reputation, it is essential to cultivate loyalty and trust in the associated products and services. Consumer satisfaction significantly contributes to reinforcing a positive brand image. Chaturvedi et al. (2024) emphasises that satisfaction is a crucial component in shaping the reputation of a service brand. According to Freundt and Foschiera (2023), trust is forged through the consistent delivery of promised quality. As articulated by Freundt and Foschiera (2023), trust is the result of expectations from external parties regarding a particular task. Building trust is a gradual process, influenced by past experiences and the ultimate outcomes of those experiences.

As identified in the previous section, there are various challenges faced by the companies related to sustainability in marketing due to a lack of consumer education and their awareness factors, which need to be mitigated. Therefore, Marcon Nora et al. (2023) have commented that **stakeholder engagement** can be an effective strategy to mitigate sustainability issues in which the companies can involve customers, employees, and investors. In this scenario, the investors must be satisfied with organisational behaviour in terms of maintaining proper communication. The investors agree with a company to invest or support financially when they observe constant growth of the brand thinking the return on investment will be high and assured. Thus, the selection of investors, and maintaining proper communication are the core strategies for mitigating sustainability issues. Companies can initiate their engagement with sustainability by **embracing green marketing**, and formulating a green marketing strategy marks the initial phase. This strategy is designed to guide companies in adapting to the environmentally conscious landscape, with the acknowledgment that there isn't a universal green marketing approach suitable for every company. Nguyen-Viet (2023) clarifies that companies should assess the potential size of the green market within their industry and their capacity to distinguish their products based on environmental attributes before selecting a strategy from the available options in the matrix.

Social marketing targets individuals' genuine self-interests to instigate motivational changes. Successful sustainable marketing also relies on understanding and appealing to consumers' self-interest. Various social marketing initiatives have endeavoured to transform values and attitudes as a strategy to impact behaviours (Li et al. 2023). The alteration of values and attitudes is frequently considered a necessary precursor to endeavours aiming for behavioural change. In mitigating the challenges related to marketing sustainability, the use of social media marketing strategy can be more effective than others. Social media campaigns seems to be beneficial for promoting products and services in a cost-effective way. This type of marketing

strategy through digital medium has efficiency to accumulate a wide range of consumers in terms of gathering target audiences from particular communities shortly.

2.8 Theoretical Underpinning

Triple Bottom-line theory

The Triple Bottom Line Theory is considered to be a marketing related framework which initially helps to understand the range of sustainability that goes beyond conventional business metrics. The framework encompasses three dimensions of sustainability, namely, Economic, Social, and Environmental. The economic aspect of this theory critically evaluates a company or organisation's financial performance in terms of identifying its profitability in the competitive market. On the other hand, social dimensions aims to find specific impact of business activities on its sustainability (Senyo and Osabutey, 2023). Environmental aspects try to assess a company's ecological footprint along with its focus on the process of reducing negative impacts on the environment. The theory influences a holistic approach that overall correlates business traits and acknowledges that if a company tries to run their business for a long time it needs an effective balance between financial practice, social equity, and environmental responsibility. In this research, the theory has been applied to assess the methodology and its effectiveness in addressing marketing-related challenges faced by the chosen company within the realm of sustainability-driven marketing.

Green Marketing Theory

The theoretical framework of green marketing primarily underscores the adoption of environmentally conscious policies to preserve ecological equilibrium. Green marketing initiatives spotlight products and services that contribute positively to the environment. Marketing strategies are developed based on the customer preferences in terms of identifying customer needs and presenting appropriate promotional activities to attract consumers (Liao et al. 2020). People prefer products that are not harmful to them as well as it is sustainable for ecological balance, that makes consumer groups happy. In this context, the green marketing theory explains the process of a virtual marketing system that aims to enhance consumer awareness regarding eco-friendly products and services. The green marketing theory is potentially related to the present study, in examining the ways the selected company can assess

its existing organisational practices and develop its marketing approaches to integrate environmental sustainability.

Stakeholder theory:

Stakeholder theory is generally an organisational management framework that critically assesses a company's principles, ethics, and values, by emphasising social responsibility (Marcon Nora et al. 2023). Basically, stakeholders are the persons directly or indirectly involved with a business and contribute to developing business activities. Key stakeholders of an organisation are such as investors, customers, and employees, who contribute to operational success. Stakeholders hold a crucial role in ensuring organisational sustainability, for example, the investors help a company financially that enhance sustainability practice of the company. As per this theory, in sustainability-driven marketing, stakeholders are responsible for any of the organisational functions including profit and loss. This theoretical framework has become one of the key considerations in business study as it has served as a platform for identifying individual stakeholder activities and their potential impacts on organisational functions. Thus, this theory has been implemented successfully to understand sustainability-driven marketing and critically assess their impacts on various stakeholders.

2.9 Literature Gap

There are a wide range of past studies available on sustainability and marketing. Additionally there are also studies available which have focused on sustainability marketing as a whole. There are studies which have focused on the topic of brand loyalty or trust. There are different studies from Gong *et al.* (2023) or Anuradha *et al.* (2023) that state how sustainable marketing can be used or has been used by organisations. Most of them do not specifically relate the topic with the brand reputation which is essential for every organisation. Most of the studies like from Khandai *et al.* (2023) or Ahmadi and Ataei (2022) lacked the required alignment with the brand reputation as they focused on brand loyalty. There is a gap in the literature where most of the study focuses on how the use of sustainable marketing campaigns affect the brand reputation. To fill the gap, the study will focus on how sustainable marketing affects brand reputation and many other aspects related to it. The study focuses on the use of sustainable marketing and how it can be used for the development of brand reputation. As most of the studies have not focused on the brand reputation aspect, most of the challenges are also missing in those studies. There would be a specific focus on the challenges an organisation might face to implement sustainable marketing. The study covers the gap and provides the necessary strategy for the effective implementation of the sustainable marketing campaign in relation to brand reputation.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

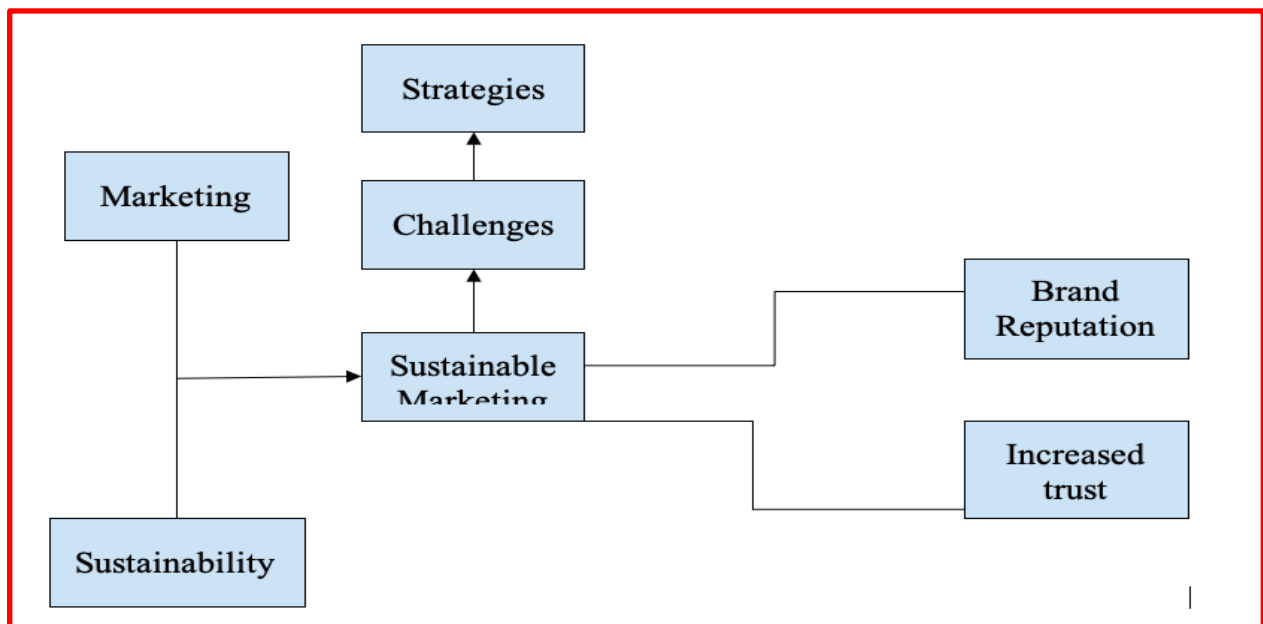


Figure No.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Created by the learner)

The conceptual framework shows the concepts that are related to the research and how they are interconnected with each other. With the increased need for sustainable processes among the organisations, there has been a development of sustainable marketing. It is essential to understand that when the marketing function of any organisation combines its processes with sustainability, they start to use sustainable marketing. The research is developed with a focus on sustainable marketing and how it is related to brand reputation and trust. The framework shows that there is a link between the use of sustainable marketing and brand reputation and that link or effect is the main focus of the research. The framework also shows how there are multiple challenges that the implementation of sustainable marketing faces. The research has been developed with the focus on the relation between brand reputation and sustainable marketing. To understand that relationship, their study also needs to recognise the challenges an organisation might face during its implementation. Additionally, for the challenges, the study recognises some strategies that can be used by the organisations to implement the use of sustainable marketing properly. These are the main concepts for the study which are used in the completion of the research.

2.11 Conclusion

The chapter has critically reviewed various kinds of literature related to marketing, and sustainability-driven marketing along with clarifying various concepts of sustainability-driven approaches. Brand reputation has been identified to be crucial to sustaining organisational

profitability as it positively impacts people and it helps sustaining business. Besides, various impacts of sustainability on brand reputation are also discussed here such as maintaining customer loyalty, investor engagement, and so on. This chapter is effective to conduct further study as the literature gaps were highlighted here which will be focused on in the next chapters.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the techniques and procedures used in academic research to identify and analyse information regarding a specific research phenomenon (Mishra and Alok, 2022). The chapter sheds light on the selected methodological tools and techniques to undertake in-depth research on the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns to improve brand reputation in the limelight of the UK's ever-evolving and highly dynamic business market. The chapter has interpreted the selected research philosophy, approach, design, and strategy. These facets of methodology have set the tone of data collection and analysis methods. Further, proper justification has been given for selecting specific methodological techniques over other available ones. Effective data collection was crucial to delve deep into the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and the way they can help organisations enhance brand reputation. This chapter has also illustrated the way ethical guidelines have been maintained throughout the entire research.

3.2 Research Onion

Research onion is a methodological tool proposed by Saunders, which helps to organise and develop academic research in a structured manner following the different layers of the onion (Iovino and Tsitsianis, 2020). In this research, the help of research onion has been taken as the empirical guide for the methodological selection. Based on the real design of Saunders 'research onion' of Saunders, Melnikovas has made some modifications to the model considering the complexity of modern research.

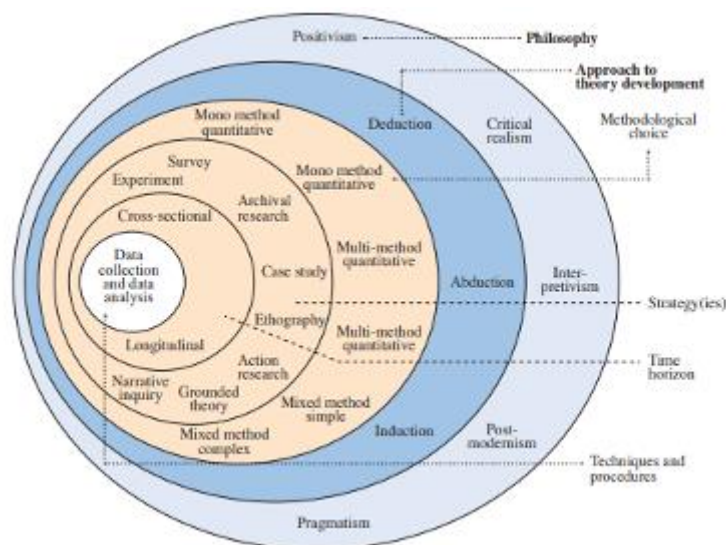


Figure 3.1: Research Onion

(Source: Melnikovas, 2018)

In this image, five different layers can be observed, and all of these layers directly impact the innermost layer, which is data collection and analysis. The outermost layer of the onion is philosophy, and the second outer layer is the approach of research, through which research theories are developed. The third layer is methodological choice or research design, which is categorised as mono, multi, or mixed methods. The fourth layer is strategy, and in this layer, eight different strategies can be observed. The layer before data collection and analysis is regarding time horizon, which denotes the time range in which data is collected or will be collected. All these layers directly influence the data collection and analysis process. Research Onion has been guided to ensure all methodology factors are aligned with their previous and next component.

3.3 Research Philosophy

The term ‘research philosophy’ denotes the belief regarding the manner following which data about a topic is being gathered, analysed and used. According to the study by Al-Ababneh (2020), the importance of creating the link between ‘research methodology with ontology and epistemology’ is crucial to develop a clear understanding of the research phenomenon. As per the onion, philosophy can be divided into ‘positivism, realism, interpretivism, modernism and pragmatism’. However, the existence of modernism in academic research is rare. All of these philosophies have their own set of benefits and challenges. Considering the research objectives, interpretivism philosophy was selected. This philosophy finds humans as active, while other philosophies perceive humans as passive. Such the nature of ‘interpretivism philosophy’ helps to ensure the higher validity of research findings. As per Zahle (2021), interpretivism has an association with qualitative design. The study topic thrived on the necessity of a cross-sectional study, as there was the need to link the impact of sustainable-driven marketing with brand reputation. Interpretivism philosophy is highly beneficial in cross-sectional studies. Considering the nature of the topic, interpretivism has been selected as the prime research philosophy over other choices.

3.4 Research Approach

‘Research approach’ refers to the entire plan to undertake research, and it is the intersection of ‘philosophy and design’ (Mulisa, 2022). It is often considered as the general plan for a study. ‘Research Approach’ is divided into deductive, abductive and inductive. There are significant differences between these three approaches regarding hypothesis testing. The deductive approach is more focused on deriving ‘validity of assumptions’, whereas ‘inductive approach’ helps develop new theories and generalise existing ones. The topic required the generalisation of existing theories to link theoretical principles and real-world practices that are entangled

with sustainability-driven marketing to improve brand image or reputation. Considering the nature of the topic and the focus of the inductive approach, this has been selected for theoretical development.



Figure 3.2: Advantages of Inductive approach

(Source: Self-created)

Inductive approach has a deeper connection with qualitative design and qualitative ‘data collection’ approach (Bingham and Witkowsky, 2021). The selection of this specific approach has provided better flexibility and adaptability. With the help of this philosophy, it was possible to explore the beliefs and values of existing theories and link them with real-world practices, while conceptualising new theories. Further, as the inductive approach focuses on observing theories, it has helped to develop new ideas regarding the role of sustainability-driven marketing in brand reputation.

3.5 Research Design

Design of research is perceived as the entire framework of the research process; it allows the sharpening of the study topic. It is also considered the process of answering research questions using empirical data and evidence (Flick, 2022). As per the research onion, research design is divided into quantitative and qualitative, and there are three types of approaches to design which are mono, multi and mixed. Mono refers to the utilisation of single research design throughout the entire research. On the contrary, the mixed method is the strategy of using two different designs. Multi-method denotes the application of ‘multiple qualitative or quantitative design’.

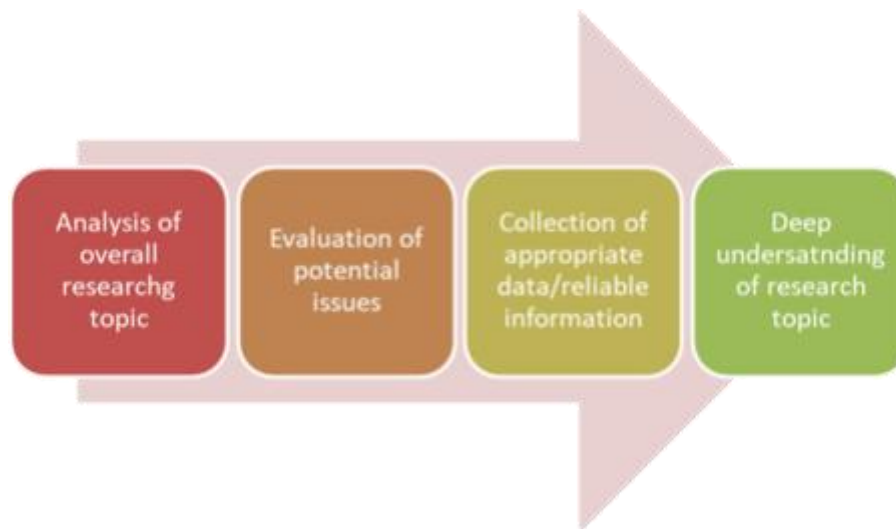


Figure 3.3: Benefits of qualitative design

(Source: Self-created)

Qualitative design has been selected over quantitative design as the research topic thrived on answering questions that can not be simply answered by putting them into numbers. Analysis of a social phenomenon requires extended knowledge and understanding that are beyond numerical figures. Further, qualitative design has helped to bridge the link between, research ‘philosophy, approach and design’. There is an intricate connection between inductive approach and qualitative design. It is said that qualitative design employs inductive thinking to move from one observation to another and consider a broader scope of generalisation of theories (Okoli, 2023). With the help of this design, the behaviour of organisations and attitudes towards sustainability-driven marketing has been explored. Further, it has helped to investigate if brand reputation is the driver of increasing utilisation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns.

3.6 Research Strategy

‘Research strategy’ is the guide for research activities and the way the research aim is going to be achieved. It has been observed in the research onion, research strategy is divided into experiment, survey, ‘archival research’, ‘grounded theory’, ‘case study’, ethnography, ‘action research’, and narrative inquiry.

Analysing the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for brand reputation was a vast task as different sectors and different organisations in the UK might use different marketing techniques, and their perceptions of brand reputation are different. Quantifying the views, behaviours and practices of different organisations in the UK regarding brand reputation creation through sustainability-driven marketing was not possible; it could have led to a conflict of interest. The research could have lost its authenticity, which thrived on the necessity of

narrowing down the topic. In this regard, a case study came to the rescue and a case study on 'Unilever' has been selected. Utilisation of a case study strategy has helped to quantify the research phenomenon and closely analyse in the limelight of 'Unilever', how sustainability-driven marketing is helping UK organisations to increase their brand reputation. Case study analysis ensures effective analysis of the relationship between people, context and phenomenon (Badke, 2021). In addition, this has increased the ability to capture the context and explore different drivers and facets of sustainability-driven marketing.

3.7 Time Horizon

This layer of research methodology illustrates the time frame of the cross-sectional or short-term analysis. Further, time horizon also denotes the specific time of data collection (Melnikovas, 2018). Time horizon is divided into cross-sectional and longitudinal. In this research, a cross-sectional time horizon has been utilised. This particular time horizon helps to collect vast amounts of data within a small-time frame and is extremely less expensive. Further, analysing the importance of sustainability-driven marketing on brand reputation required a vast amount of data, which was made possible with the help of a cross-sectional time horizon. The identification of the relationship between different variables becomes easy with the application of a cross-sectional time horizon compared to a longitudinal one (Theinnovidea, 2021). The selection has ensured the analysis of multiple factors and considered different outcomes while exemplifying the research topic.

3.8 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering, measuring and analysing materials to extract information from them regarding research phenomena. This is the innermost layer of research methodology as per research onion. The selection of interpretivism philosophy, inductive approach and qualitative design, along with a cross-sectional time horizon, have a direct impact on the choice of data collection method.

There are two distinguished types used for collecting data, these are primary and secondary methods (Mölder *et al.* 2021). These methods have completely different approaches to acquire data and also have their own set of challenges as well as benefits.

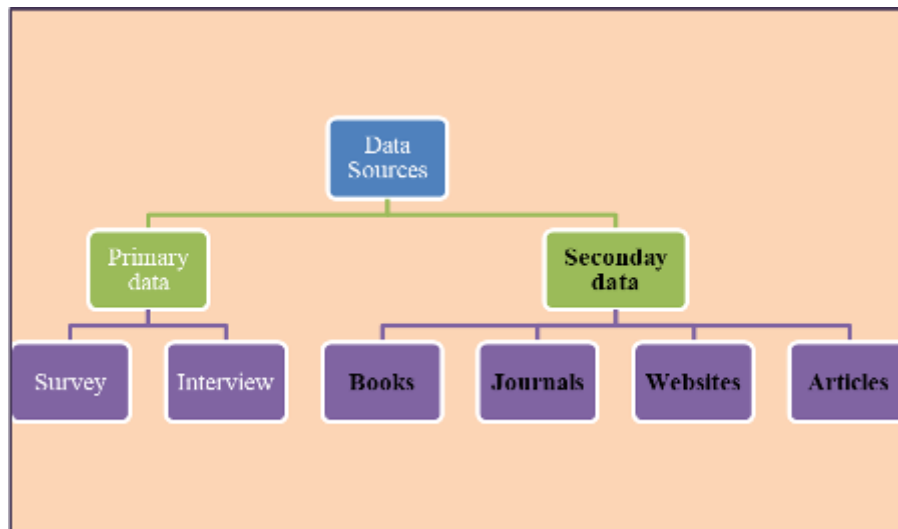


Figure 3.4: Data sources

(Source: self-created)

Exploring the connection between brand reputation and sustainability-driven marketing requires a vast amount of data. Considering this, a secondary data collection method has been adopted. Alam (2021) mentioned that the secondary data collection process is highly effective to collect a high volume of data within less time. As the research has followed qualitative design, aligning with the research design, a secondary qualitative method has been adopted to collect required data to satisfy the research objectives and answer the research questions. Secondary qualitative data has been acquired by searching with keywords on Google Search Engine. An effective search strategy was developed. The search strategy included a list of inclusion criteria. The inclusion criterias for the data collection process were stated below.

- Secondary sources published after 2014 were included within this study.
- Secondary sources related to sustainability-driven marketing of Unilever were included within this study.
- Secondary sources published in the English language were included within this study.

In accordance with this inclusion criteria, selection of the secondary sources were considered. Different keywords were framed to develop the search strategy. The keywords included “Sustainability-driven marketing of Unilever”, “Impact on consumers”, “Impact on business and many more. Combination of these keywords were used to search for relevant secondary sources. Company reports and newspaper reports were used as major secondary sources for the data collection processes.

3.9 Data Sampling

Data sampling is the technique of selecting a subset of data from the vast available data set to extract meaningful information that will help support the research findings with empirical evidence. This process is basically the approach to select data that are required to address research objectives. Data sampling has been done with the help of ‘simple random sampling’. This method requires less time to sample the required amount of data from a vast available data set without compromising on data quality. The usability of this method is extremely high as it employs a randomised method to select data subsets from main sets. Further, as there is not a structured method of selecting a subset, each material from the data set gets an equal chance of getting selected in research, leading to fewer chances of bias (Berndt, 2020). ‘Simple random sampling’ has helped to sample large chunks of data within the least possible time to complete the entire research within the deadline.

3.10 Data Analysis

Filtering, clearing, scrutinising and transforming raw data into meaningful insights from the collected data is known as the process of data analysis. There are several techniques that are often used for analysing data in academic research. These techniques are noted as thematic analysis, statistical analysis, explanatory analysis, and predictive analysis. Kiger and Varpio (2020), has mentioned that thematic analysis method is the most suitable method to analyse secondary qualitative data. Further, the authors have added that ‘thematic data analysis method’ helps to discover new perspectives with the help of existing data. On the other hand, by using this analysis technique, the findings are presented in the form of direct themes that have direct connection with the research objectives. In this regard, Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019), have stated that thematic analysis is beneficial in exploring the issues regarding a research phenomenon. Further, using this technique, relevant themes have been developed in the findings chapter that are aligned with the research objectives and the research topic.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

The research has taken serious account of different ethical factors to sidestep the chances of academic misconduct, ethical issues and legal activity. Ethical contemplation has been ensured by clearly stating the research methods, especially the data collection and data analysis techniques. Further, all the collected data has been stored in a safe device and has been used for this research purpose only. Data has been used without data manipulation and modification. In addition, the help of ‘Data Protection Act, 2018’ has been taken to avoid data privacy and security challenges (Legislation, 2024). The study has properly acknowledged the efforts of the authors in the form of in-text citations when information has been utilised from their

publications and writings. Accuracy and integrity have been maintained throughout the research by avoiding misinterpretation and data manipulation.

3.12 Research Timeline

Actions	Week 1	Week 2-3	Week 4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8	Week 9	Week 10
Writing research proposal							
Forming research objectives and aim							
Finalising the research							
Planning data collection							
Analysing collected data							
Meetings with module head							
Final submission							

Figure 3.5: Gantt Chart

(Source: Self-created)

3.13 Summary

The selection of different tools and techniques of research methodology by following the ‘research onion’ has ensured a proper flow and has given a structured manner to this research. Qualitative design and secondary data collection methods have helped to acquire all the necessary information to shed light on the role of sustainability-driven marketing and its connection with brand reputation in the UK. Further, the selection of a case study strategy has helped to narrow down the topic and ensure better quantification. Overall, the selected components of the methodology have helped to ensure maximum validity and accuracy of the research findings and answer the research question.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter served the purpose of analysing and interpreting the results developed from the data collection process. This dissertation study aimed to analyse the significance of sustainability-driven marketing activities on the brand reputation of Unilever. This chapter was divided into two major sections. The first section highlighted different ways through which structured themes were developed for this dissertation study. The major steps were highlighted within this section. The second section portrays the findings and analysis of this dissertation study. The findings were developed under the research aim and research objectives. Analysis of the findings was conducted within the structured themes.

4.2 Steps involved in the development of themes

This study effectively focused on the development of themes to interpret and analyse the information gained from the data collection process. Different steps were followed during the development of structured themes within this findings and analysis section. The first step involved the development of common thematic codes or patterns from the collected secondary data sources. From each of the secondary sources, common keywords and patterns related to research objectives were identified. These common codes or patterns were then structured together to form structured themes. The structured themes certainly reflected the purpose of each research objective. Overall, four structured themes were developed within this study. The thematic table stated in the appendix section certainly reflected the sources and codes developed for each theme. In accordance with these structured themes, findings were interpreted and analysed effectively. The four major themes developed for this study are mentioned below.

- Theme 1: Significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns in terms of improving the brand reputation of Unilever Plc.
- Theme 2: Different ways through which Unilever Plc framed their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and its impact on brand reputation
- Theme 3: Challenges faced by Unilever Plc during implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns
- Theme 4: Recommendation of strategic ways through which challenges faced by Unilever Plc during the implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns can be addressed.

4.3 Findings and Analysis

This section of the findings chapters mainly focused on the development of the findings gained from the data collection process. The findings were then interpreted and analysed following the structured themes developed within the thematic coding table.

Theme 1: Significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns in terms of improving the brand reputation of Unilever Plc.

This theme highlighted the significance or importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns within Unilever Plc. Sustainability-driven marketing campaigns hold a significant position towards improving the brand image of Unilever Plc. It was found that the implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns certainly helped Unilever to improve its brand image and brand equity within the FMCG marketplace. The sustainability marketing report of Unilever (2023), highlighted that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns certainly helped the brand to increase sustainable household buying behaviour of the customers by 20 per cent within the marketplace. Moreover, the report highlighted an improvement in brand trust and brand equity among the customers within the marketplace (Unilever, 2023). Thus, it can be analysed that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns positively motivate customers towards the purchase of sustainable household products delivered by the brand within the marketplace. This showed an increase in household purchases. As a result, the overall brand trust among the customers increased and reflected a strong development within brand equity and brand reputation within the FMCG sector of the UK. Moreover, it was found that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and practices certainly supported the overall growth of the brand along with an increase in brand reputation. The news report of Unilever (2020), highlighted that effective sustainability-driven marketing campaigns certainly enhanced the brand performances of sustainable living brands of the organisation within the FMCG sector. Thus, it can be analysed that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever certainly cultivated the purpose of sustainability among the customers. As a result, customers showed more inclination towards household products that were categorised under the sustainability category. This certainly helped the organisation to improve the growth and reputation of its sustainable brands within the FMCG sector of the UK. Unilever (2020) found that driving and marketing sustainable measures becomes a necessity for FMCG businesses due to the presence of unaware customers in terms of their trust in the brand and misconceptions regarding the products. Therefore, the indication towards acknowledging customers with the value of sustainability has been perceived by Unilever as an integral practice through its marketing. A similar viewpoint was also identified in the

literature published by Kortam and Mahrous (2020) who advocated the necessity of acknowledging and communicating the advances and positivity that sustainable practices provide to society.

Furthermore, it was found that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns certainly improved transparency among consumers and Unilever in terms of the effective incorporation of sustainable business processes. In light of the above context, the news report of Unilever (2023), claimed that customers expected transparency and actions that reflected the approach of the company towards sustainable business operations. These certainly improved the overall trust among the consumers towards the sustainable business approach of Unilever within the FMCG sector. Thus, it can be analysed that the trust developed among the consumers certainly helped to improve the overall brand reputation of Unilever within the marketplace. Therefore, sustainability-driven marketing shared a positive relationship with the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the FMCG sector of the UK. Nevertheless, none of the literature mentioned above clearly stated the need for transparency or emphasised the demand for transparency in sustainable marketing practices. This might also suggest the need for the development of a better viewpoint in the literature. The discussion on the improvement of FMCG business practices should have a greater emphasis towards transparency and communication. However, the practice of clear and constant communication was identified in the literature which helps understand the encouragement that businesses require in their current platform.

Theme 2: Different ways through which Unilever Plc framed their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and its impact on brand reputation

This theme effectively highlighted the ways through which Unilever Plc framed its sustainability-driven marketing activities and campaigns within the marketplace along with its impact on the brand reputation. It was found that the company focused on the combination of marketing, sustainability and technology in terms of the development of effective sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. The news report of Marketing Beat (2023), highlighted that the company focused on the development of a sustainability strategy that intersected marketing activities, sustainable promotions and technology implementation. This marketing approach certainly implicated sustainability-focused marketing adverts across different social media platforms and digital channels.

In this aspect, an effective strategic approach to include sustainability approaches is the segmentation, targeting and positioning approach (STP) in the marketing strategies of businesses. This approach and strategy are effective in identifying a segment of consumers which can be influenced heavily by sustainable marketing approaches for businesses to have

greater brand recognition through their broader consumer base. On the other hand, it was found that the company effectively focused on social media marketing and influencer marketing approaches in terms of the effective development of sustainability-driven marketing strategies. Eventually, different platforms of social media contributed towards delivering a wide range of inspirations among customers to develop sustainable behaviour during purchase of products within the FMCG category (Unilever, 2023). Unilever, effectively leveraged the power of social media platforms and developed different kinds of marketing campaigns that inspired customers to incorporate sustainable purchase behaviour with the products of the brand in the marketplace. Moreover, it was found that 73 percent of customers were inspired and adopted sustainable purchase behaviour from different types of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever (Unilever, 2023). These campaigns were promoted through a wide range of social media platforms. This certainly implicated the fact that development of sustainable behaviour among customers certainly promoted brand reputations of Unilever. Furthermore, Unilever certainly conducted different kinds of influencer marketing activities (Unilever, 2023). This further improved their sustainable marketing campaigns and improved brand reputation effectively.

Other findings highlighted that Unilever effectively focused on ad-based reward programs to frame their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. The news report of Drum (2023), portrayed that Unilever framed short videos that reflected the sustainability stories of the brand and then effectively rewarded customers for engagement with the marketing content. Thus, it can be analysed that the reward-based program certainly increased the engagement rate of the customers with the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever. As a result, customers effectively developed the knowledge of the sustainable business approach of Unilever and it aligned with the sustainability preferences of the customers within the FMCG sector of the UK. As a result, the trust and reputation of Unilever positively increased among the customers. In this similar aspect, various supporting literature have also been identified in the research through its literature review section.

Theme 3: Challenges faced by Unilever Plc during the implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns

The potentiality of brand reputation remains highly influential in the development of businesses in terms of competition. The need for sustainable marketing in the current business landscape is connected to challenges that are beyond the control or reach of corporations. Regardless of unfathomable challenges regarding this issue, there remain challenges that are highly close to

corporations. One such challenge that this study has identified is transparency which has a very deep influence on the success and effectiveness of marketing practices of businesses such as Unilever. It was found by Fleming (2018) that keeping transparent practices in the industry remains a challenge for most businesses as most corporations experience difficulty in maintaining transparency in demonstrating sustainable practices. A strong indication towards this challenge was found in Unilever in terms of its inability to keep sustainable commitments consistent. A very related challenge and emerging context from this aspect was highlighted by Grijalvo and Garcia-Wang (2023) as greenwashing. This concept is extremely related to marketing practices as discussed in the literature. Since this issue is related to the motive of demonstrating false sustainable practices, transparency remains a very critical requirement in this case (Grijalvo and Garcia-Wang 2023). From the development of the first theme in this study, it was seen that brand reputation and customer retention remain highly connected to the practice of transparent sustainability. This has contributed to developing a greater knowledge of sustainable practices and their related challenges. The findings of this study suggest the change in headquarters and ownership has contributed to this challenge.

The emergence of different challenges in bringing sustainable marketing practices is also supported by the growing concern and expectations among consumers. The high level of consumer knowledge and awareness is gradually resulting in greater expectations being attached to businesses which remain difficult to fulfil for most businesses. The secondary exploration of this study through Unilever (2019) has found that increasing consumer awareness has directly affected the trust levels being put on the marketing of businesses. The literature suggested, in this aspect, that customers with greater expectations are placing great emphasis on bringing maximum positivity from corporate activities. Evident from the viewpoint of Alan Jope, the current Unilever CEO also places a huge emphasis on trust from the customers (Unilever, 2019). It was found through deeper explorations in this study that marketing in the current landscape is strongly challenged by the critical trust that is being put towards corporations.

The literature suggested the need for the maintenance of standards and quality of sustainable marketing in the process. Unilever (2019) has shown a very genuine requirement for the development of authenticity and quality of information that is being demonstrated to the public. Difficulties arise in this situation in terms of facilitating the marketing principles with a positive purpose. This is supported by the statement and popular opinion that corporations are not facilitating the marketing objectives along with their activities. It is found that the purpose that

is put to the marketing objectives is seldom transmitted into activities (Rector et al. 2023). This is derived as a challenge in driving an effective amount of sustainable marketing practices.

Moving further to challenges experienced by corporations in bringing sustainable practices is also facilitated by the unaware section of the society and consumer base in the world market. Jansen et al. (2023) stated in the literature that there remains a strong necessity for developing awareness and information among a large section of the consumer base. This is becoming a strong challenge as it is resulting in the ineffectiveness of the message and encouragement that corporations provide towards the customer base through marketing. The ineffectiveness of marketing practices from the unaware sections of the community is posing a great emphasis on the increase of promotional activities for corporations. Similarly, Unilever (2019) also helped in understanding that there is a strong need to develop consumer awareness first to improve the effectiveness of sustainable practices. For this, the study identified Unilever's perceiving the need for change in behaviour and adoption of necessary activities that will help make customers aware of the grave situation of sustainability through marketing.

However, exploring the secondary sources for this study has brought the challenge of investment and funding for the improvement of marketing and sustainable practices in the organisation. The issues related to insufficient funding from investors towards the development of sustainable practices in organisations (Naidu and Kerber, 2022). The critical approach from the investors has directly affected the success rate of the adoption of sustainable measures in practice. In contrast, the literature discussed and emphasised the influence of the supply chain of corporations on the sustainability of practices. Both these varied challenges show that there is a great requirement for corporations to enlarge the vision to identify the underlying issues.

Theme 4: Recommendation of strategic ways through which challenges faced by Unilever Plc during implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns can be addressed

The motive of developing sustainable marketing in the corporation is highly affected by the challenges as discussed above. These challenges showed the grave circumstances that should be minimised or addressed in one way or another. To explore this purpose, the research also conducted a secondary analysis that found a diverse set of strategic ways by which sustainability can be effectively driven in marketing measures. For the maximum value output from sustainable marketing, Unilever (2023) stated that leading the charge in the industry would have a huge impact on the progress of this motive. To drive maximum output from sustainable marketing, the firm suggests and practices leadership attributes in the industry. The firm suggested that the industry requires a leading figure that would demonstrate the values

and principles of sustainability. This remains a very close concern for the organisation as it emphasises the development of sustainability through the upgradation of its business model (Unilever, 2023). This activity is highly perceived by the businesses to drive maximum value and effectiveness to the practices. This has indicated a very critical perspective towards the development of environmentally conscious practices.

Although many recommendations have been identified in the literature for the said cause, the influence of innovation remains very close to the development of sustainability. Unilever (2023) showed its critical consideration towards innovation as a very strict strategy towards sustainability. The need for innovation in the development of products that have the most customer integration and attraction in the market. Therefore, a close link between the literature and the secondary explorations of this study can be identified. It is with great emphasis on innovation, that both literature and the secondary data suggest that innovation can bring positive results for the brand. Looking further to innovation as a strategic measure for the development of sustainable marketing has been facilitated by secondary research. Walker (2023) identified the application of email campaigns as an innovative approach to the development of sustainability in marketing activities. The aspect of conducting email campaigns in the marketing measures can directly contribute to sustainable marketing as it would bring more effectiveness and less environmental impact in reaching customers. This strategy can be developed with maximum emphasis on the segmentation, targeting and positioning aspects of the marketing procedure to better reach the customers.

Wallach and Popovich (2023) in the literature effectively discussed the development of Corporate Social Responsibility as part of sustainable marketing undertaken by businesses. The aspect of CSR activities undertaken to address the need for sustainability was suggested in terms of maintaining brand value and image among the respective people. The perception kept by the most significant stakeholders can be informed using this strategy as per the deeper explorations undertaken by the authors. Since brand reputation has been a major discussion of this study, the maintenance of CSR activities has been related to the development of the same through numerous ways. On a similar perception, Walker (2023) also suggested the development of marketing practices with more transparency. The account of brand reputation and image is sincerely kept through transparency in the practices. The idea of having transparent activities and procedures for the introduction of products in the market is very effectively addressed by transparency as found in the secondary research of this study.

The literature suggested the development of social media marketing as also a major recommendation for the improvement of sustainability. The interest provided by each

individual in the market shows varied motivations. Driving sustainability in the workplace becomes very essential as the discussions above have shown. The improvement of sustainable marketing by emphasising the self-interests of the people has created huge development in the marketing measures of the corporations.

4.4 Summary

The chapter above presented a detailed discussion of the main findings and the literature. It has discussed the interconnectedness of the literature with the secondary data explored in this research. Many similarities were found during the discussion of the above section. However, the findings and discussion of the study have not found many differences in the above section. The discussion showed that there is a very high probability of improvement by following the right number of strategies that have been found through secondary explorations of the study.

Chapter 5- Discussions

Theme 1: Significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns in terms of improving the brand reputation of Unilever Plc.

Nocke and Strausz (2023) added in the literature regarding sustainable marketing and brand reputation which emphasises the need for brand reputation. The behaviour output demonstrated by the customers in the market. As marketing measures directly influence perceptions and motivations, engagement towards a business is estimated through this criterion. It becomes very essential for businesses to maintain good connections with customers. The establishment of a good and positive brand reputation by leveraging sustainable marketing as a measure indicates the development of purchasing intent as identified by Nocke and Strausz (2023). As sustainable market practices are becoming prevalent and regular among global corporations, the centrifugal focus develops upon the idea of bringing a positive image to the market as stated by Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021). A positive image leading to greater purchasing intent and behaviour becomes highly influential as per the current necessities of the competitive market as envisioned by Unilever (2023).

On a similar note, the literature also suggested the development of customer loyalty through sustainable practices in marketing processes. The connection between these practices has both direct and indirect connection with brand advocacy towards the customers. A sense of brand loyalty remains very significant for corporations as desired by Unilever in current circumstances. Trust and loyalty emerging from sustainable marketing practices often result in positive emotional attachment from the customers (Voordt and Jensen, 2023). The essence of emotional attachment simply becomes a way to generate profit and customer retention in the market. This indicates an affirmative connection with the secondary data found by the research. The motivation instilled by marketing practices of businesses to gain more customers initially starts from building trust and a positive image.

This finding is also closely related to the identification of Kemper and Ballantine (2019) regarding the introduction of products with ecological and societal considerations. The needs of customers in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem as stated by the authors have a very deep impact on the development of products by the corporations such as Unilever as found in this study. The need to maintain this growing demand in business operations and its demonstration becomes possible through marketing measures. As the authors have suggested the need for the development of sustainable products and practices, should be demonstrated through marketing that will address the expectations of people.

Thus, it can be implied that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and practices formed a major medium between Unilever and customers to promote transparency and actions that reflected the approach of the company towards sustainable business operations. This viewpoint was further understood in the literature as it suggested government initiatives and encouragement towards corporations in driving transparent actions. The growth of concern among customers in the world has highly fostered the need for transparent demonstration of sustainable practices (Parvatiyar, 2021). The promotion of these practices in social media, however, with strict maintenance of transparency will also facilitate the idea discussed in the paragraph above. The necessity of acknowledging the people but with transparent measures helps understand the viewpoint of Kortam and Mahrous (2020) and Parvatiyar (2021).

Theme 2: Different ways through which Unilever Plc framed their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and its impact on brand reputation

The intersection of attractive marketing content of Unilever through the incorporation of technology and digital channels along with the development of content that reflected the sustainability approach of the business positively motivated the customers within the FMCG sector of the UK to engage with the content. As a result, the overall engagement rate with the promotional activities of the brand among the consumers certainly increased and it positively impacted the growth of the brand reputation within the marketplace. Moreover, in this regard, according to the study by Richardson (2022), organisations generally depend on various measures to implement strategic approaches regarding marketing and sustainability to showcase their responsibility towards the environment and attract a wider consumer base.

As a result, the overall trust and brand reputation certainly increased among the consumers towards Unilever. In this regard, supporting evidence has also been found in the literature review section of the study on the effectiveness of incorporating social media marketing initiatives to attract the present tech-savvy audience base. As per the viewpoints of Alkhatib, Kecskés and Keller (2023), the rate of integration of technology has significantly increased due to digitalisation along with the changed preferences of the audience base towards using online platforms for every aspect of their lives since the global pandemic. Digital communication as well as digital marketing initiatives have thus become a crucial factor for businesses to attain a competitive position in their respective industry among their competitors. Digital marketing helps businesses showcase their product and service offerings in a more innovative form where they can also communicate directly with their consumer base through various online and digital communication channels to make closer and stronger relationships with their consumers. These

channels such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, email marketing and many others assist businesses in showcasing their sustainability efforts to cater to a more environmentally friendly consumer base. Moreover, according to Alkhatib, Kecskés and Keller (2023), green marketing initiatives implemented by brands focus more on utilising digital marketing channels to showcase their ability to adapt as well as responsible business conduct for the welfare of consumers, communities, environment and the planet.

On the other hand, according to the study by Dash, Sharma and Sharma (2023), it has been found that businesses implement social media influencer marketing to reach out to a broader consumer base. Businesses generally employ social media influencers whose core values are well-aligned with the company vision and values. This thus helps the business to portray its vision of environmental sustainability seamlessly with the help of the influencers. Moreover, the current trend of following social media influencers also helps businesses to reach out to a varied range of consumers effectively. Along with this approach, as opined by Andronie *et al.* (2019), businesses also integrate advanced technologies such as big data to portray their green initiatives in a more effective manner. The technology incorporation also helps businesses to predict consumer trends which they utilise to understand evolving consumer behaviours and trends and based on that tailor more efficient marketing strategies that can attract consumers showcasing their responsible approaches towards the environment.

Theme 3: Challenges faced by Unilever Plc during the implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns

This theme effectively discussed the challenges faced by Unilever Plc during effective implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. One of the major challenges that findings has identified is transparency which has a very deep influence on the success and effectiveness of marketing practices of businesses such as Unilever. It was found by Fleming (2018) that keeping transparent practices in the industry remains a challenge for most businesses as most corporations' experience difficulty in maintaining transparency in demonstrating sustainable practices. A strong indication towards this challenge was found in Unilever in terms of its inability to keep sustainable commitments consistent. A very related challenge and emerging context from this aspect was highlighted by Grijalvo and Garcia-Wang (2023) as greenwashing. Consumers, according to Lebo and Managi (2023), are becoming aware and concerned regarding the environment as their education and information level is increased. The consciousness of the practices and their impacts on the corporations are becoming very transparent due the governmental intervention. This has resulted in the establishment of a greater challenge for businesses which is also found in this study. The

secondary exploration of this study through Unilever (2019) has found that increasing consumer awareness has directly affected the trust levels being put on the marketing of businesses. The literature suggested, in this aspect, that customers with greater expectations are placing great emphasis on bringing maximum positivity from corporate activities.

Evident from the viewpoint of Alan Jope, the current Unilever CEO also places a huge emphasis on trust from the customers (Unilever, 2019). It was found through deeper explorations in this study that marketing in the current landscape is strongly challenged by the critical trust that is being put towards corporations.

The literature suggested the need for the maintenance of standards and quality of sustainable marketing in the process. In the words of Rector et al. (2023), sustainability was found to be complex as a practice of the demand for the maintenance of quality and standards remains very closely attached. This is highlighted in the secondary data explorations in this study as it found authenticity as an essential element in the development of sustainable marketing. Corporations are met with challenges in keeping the standards, quality and authenticity of the marketing practices enforced with positive values in the market. Unilever (2019) has shown a very genuine requirement for the development of authenticity and quality of information that is being demonstrated to the public. Difficulties arise in this situation in terms of facilitating the marketing principles with a positive purpose. This is supported by the statement and popular opinion that corporations are not facilitating the marketing objectives along with their activities. It is found that the purpose that is put to the marketing objectives is seldom transmitted into activities (Rector et al. 2023). This is derived as a challenge in driving an effective amount of sustainable marketing practices.

However, exploring the secondary sources for this study has brought the challenge of investment and funding for the improvement of marketing and sustainable practices in the organisation. The issues related to insufficient funding from investors towards the development of sustainable practices in organisations (Naidu and Kerber, 2022). The critical approach from the investors has directly affected the success rate of the adoption of sustainable measures in practice. In contrast, the literature discussed and emphasised the influence of the supply chain of corporations on the sustainability of practices. The literature suggests that the supply chain of corporations has a huge impact on the absolute performance regarding the marketing and demonstration of sustainability in the products (Salam and Bajaba, 2023). The supply of products to the firm remains a very closely integrated process that decides the amount of sustainability that can be highlighted in the market. Therefore, the literature and findings suggest differences in suggesting the critical changes for the corporations. Both these varied

challenges show that there is a great requirement for corporations to enlarge the vision to identify the underlying issues.

Theme 4: Recommendation of strategic ways through which challenges faced by Unilever Plc during implementation of their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns can be addressed

It was found that leading the charge in the industry would have a huge impact on the progress of this motive. To drive maximum output from sustainable marketing, the firm suggests and practices leadership attributes in the industry (Unilever, 2023). This perception was further discussed in the literature through the viewpoint of Marcon Nora et al. (2023) as the authors suggested stakeholder management. The need for extending the leadership values into stakeholder management was effectively discussed by these authors. The aspect of keeping the stakeholders such as employees, investors and customers close during the process of sustainable development of products. This activity is highly perceived by the businesses to drive maximum value and effectiveness to the practices. This has indicated a very critical perspective towards the development of environmentally conscious practices. the influence of innovation remains very close to the development of sustainability. The literature through Kurek et al. (2023) suggested the need for innovation as the most effective idea and strategy for driving sustainable practice. The authors in this literature suggested the development or improvement of products and services with huge concerns for sustainability remains imperative for businesses. On a very similar note, Unilever (2023) showed its critical consideration towards innovation as a very strict strategy towards sustainability. A need for innovation in the development of products that have the most customer integration and attraction in the market. Therefore, a close link between the literature and the secondary explorations of this study can be identified. It is with great emphasis on innovation, that both literature and the secondary data suggest that innovation can bring positive results for the brand.

Driving sustainability in the workplace becomes very essential as the discussions above have shown. The improvement of sustainable marketing by emphasising the self-interests of the people has created huge development in the marketing measures of the corporations. For this particular viewpoint, Li et al. (2023) shared the facilitation of values and attitudes in the process. Since the integration of people into social media is very high, the literature suggested a huge developmental opportunity that social media marketing has in driving efficiency for sustainability. As the literature indicated the application of values, beliefs and attitudes in the marketing measures, findings also supported the facilitation of this perception. Butler (2022) also discussed this aspect further by adding authentication as a very crucial aspect in the

development of marketing measures. The need for marketing in a sustainable way must be developed with authenticity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Overall Conclusion

This dissertation study effectively served the purpose of analysing the effectiveness of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for business organisations. This research study effectively achieved its aim of understanding and evaluating the significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for Unilever on its brand reputation within the FMCG sector. To effectively achieve the aim, the study developed four major research objectives. The first major objectives highlighted and analysed the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns for Unilever Plc and its impact on the brand reputation of the company. The second objective portrayed different ways through which Unilever Plc achieved and framed its sustainability-driven marketing campaigns within the FMCG sector. The third objective effectively highlighted different kinds of challenges and issues faced by Unilever Plc during the implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns within the FMCG sector of the UK. Finally, the fourth objective portrayed different recommendations that can help the brand address the issues identified within objective 3 of this research study. Following these research objectives, a central research question was devised and sub-research questions were developed to achieve the purpose of this research study. Overall, the findings of this research study certainly aligned with these research questions and thus achieved the developed research objectives of this study.

The second chapter of this research study effectively reviewed a wide range of secondary information published in journal articles in alignment with the research context. The literature review discussed the concept of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and their impact on organisational performance. However, the literature review highlighted a gap. A gap existed in terms of understanding the importance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns on brand reputations. Most of the studies did not portray the relationship between sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and brand reputation. This further restricted the flow of information related to specific challenges faced by brands within the FMCG sector in terms of implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns that aligned with the context of brand reputation. The information collected within this research study effectively addressed these literature gaps. This research study effectively focused on the incorporation of the secondary qualitative research method. A secondary data collection process was conducted and information was sourced from company websites, annual reports, newspaper articles and

government reports. The findings developed from these secondary sources were then analysed through the application of thematic analysis.

Overall it was found that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever Plc positively impacted the brand reputation of the company within the FMCG sector. As the company implemented a wide range of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns, Unilever PLC faced different challenges. These included transparent sustainability concerns within the marketing campaigns, ineffective development of trust among the consumers and many more. As a result, different strategic recommendations were delivered within the findings and discussion chapter of this research study. Following these findings, conclusions that aligned with research objectives were framed effectively.

6.2 Conclusion linked with research objectives

Conclusion linked with research objective 1:

Research objective 1 portrayed the significance of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever Plc on their brand reputation. Overall, it was found that the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever Plc positively improved customer purchase intention within sustainable household product categories in the FMCG sector of the UK. This further helped to improve the brand trust and brand equity among the customers. Moreover, the brand performances of sustainable living brands of Unilever Plc were improved through the effective implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. Furthermore, transparency among the consumers and the brand was improved through the effective incorporation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. However, transparency and communication still remained a questionable factor as most of the studies did not highlight the transparency aspect received from the consumer end. Overall, it can be summarised that sustainability-driven marketing campaigns shared a positive relationship with the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the FMCG sector.

Conclusion linked with research objective 2:

Research objective two highlighted different ways through which the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns were implemented by Unilever Plc within the FMCG sector of the UK. Overall, it was found that Unilever Plc effectively combined the concepts of marketing, sustainability and technology to frame their sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. This positively helped them to develop different kinds of sustainability-driven marketing adverts. Furthermore, the company focused on social media marketing and influencer marketing approaches that developed sustainable purchase behaviour among the customers. Social media platforms were utilised and effective influencer marketing activities promoted the

sustainability aspects of the brands among the consumers. All these practices showed a positive impact towards improvement within the brand reputation of the company. Therefore, it can be concluded that the marketing activities of Unilever Plc helped the brand to develop sustainability-driven marketing campaigns and improve its brand reputation within the FMCG sector of the UK.

Conclusion linked with research objective 3:

The third research objective highlighted different challenges faced by the brand towards the effective implementation of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. It was found that ineffective consistencies in keeping sustainable commitments portrayed within the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns formed a major challenge faced by the brand. This further highlighted the challenges faced by the brand towards effective maintenance of transparency and accountability during the implementation of different sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. Moreover, customer awareness certainly impacted the trust level of the consumers towards different sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of Unilever. This formed another major challenge. Therefore, it can be concluded that the challenges faced by Unilever towards the implementation of sustainability-driven marketing activities negatively impacted its brand reputation within the marketplace.

Conclusion linked with research objective 4:

Overall, it can be concluded that the recommendation towards the development of effective leadership activities to drive the change within sustainability marketing activities certainly proves beneficial for Unilever to address the issues faced by the company within the marketplace. Moreover, effective innovations within sustainability programs can further help to address the issues faced by the company towards the implementation of different sustainability-driven marketing activities within the FMCG sector of the UK. Moreover, the incorporation of the CSR approach within marketing further acted as a major strategic recommendation to address the issues identified within this dissertation study.

6.3 Limitations

6.3.1 Methodology Limitations

The study only incorporated the application of a secondary qualitative data collection process. This certainly restricted the flow of information from the managers of Unilever Plc along with customers regarding the impact of sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. As a result, the authenticity and validity of the information can be considered low as the study is completely dependent on secondary sources. This formed the major limitation of the methodology chapter.

6.3.2 Findings Limitation

The overall findings highlighted the significance of sustainability-driven marketing activities on the brand reputation of Unilever Plc within the FMCG sector of the UK. However, the findings of this dissertation study failed to establish the relationship between external and internal factors that impacted the challenges faced by the company during the implementation of different sustainability-driven marketing campaigns. This formed the major limitation of the findings.

6.4 Future direction of this research study

In future, this research study can effectively incorporate the application of both primary and secondary research methods. In terms of primary research methods, interviews with managers can be conducted and surveys can be conducted with customers to understand their perspective on the sustainability-driven marketing campaigns of the company. Moreover, the findings can be directed to establish the relationship between external and internal factors that impacted the challenges faced by the company during the implementation of different sustainability-driven marketing campaigns.

6.5 Recommendations

Overall three major recommendations can be provided to Unilever Plc to improve their sustainability-marketing efforts and address the challenges faced during the implementation process. The recommendations are stated below.

Recommendation 1: To develop leadership activities and foster change within sustainability-driven marketing programs in the FMCG sector of the UK. This recommendation can help to address the accountability and transparency issues faced by the company during the implementation of sustainable marketing activities.

Recommendation 2: To develop innovative marketing campaign activities like email campaigns that promote sustainable business processes of the company. This recommendation can effectively help to address the issues of a less direct communication approach between the customers and Unilever Plc regarding their sustainable marketing activities within the FMCG sector.

Recommendation 3: It can be recommended to incorporate and promote the CSR activities of the company within the marketing campaigns. This recommendation can effectively help to improve trust among the consumers regarding the sustainable business processes of the company within the FMCG sector.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Thematic Coding Table

Sources	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
https://www.unilever.com/files/3a8d41a0-ffba-4899-8a0b-4986be51e0d0/making-purpose-pay-inspiring-sustainable-living.pdf	20 percent increase in household buying within sustainable category, increased brand trust and brand equity	Purposive advertisements, High growth, increased brand reputation, campaigns aligned with sustainable goals.		
https://www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2023/why-is-sustainability-important-for-business/	Supported growth process, increased brand reputation.			
https://www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2020/four-ways-that-sustainability-has-made-us-a-stronger-business/	Sustainability made a stronger brand, positive impact on customers and brand reputations.			
https://www.marketing-beat.co.uk/2023/05/02/unilever-sustainability-ads/		Intersection of marketing, sustainability and technology, Motivated people to make sustainable choices.		

https://www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2023/how-social-media-is-helping-people-make-the-switch-to-sustainability/		Use of social media and influencer, Promotion of sustainable branded contents.		
https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/04/28/unilever-rewarding-people-watching-its-sustainable-ads		Reward-based marketing, driving sustainability, sustainable advertisements		
https://www.marketingweek.com/the-five-challenges-facing-unilevers-new-ceo/			Inability to maintain transparent sustainability legacy within marketing practices, ineffective hiring of marketing talents.	
https://www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2019/marketing-has-a-titanic-trust-problem/			Trust problem among customers, greenwashing , development of authentic and logical sustainability promotion	

https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/unilever-under-pressure-show-sustainability-focus-is-good-business-2022-02-09/			Less investments from investors, pressure from investors, no long-term future with sustainable promotion.	
https://www.business-reporter.co.uk/sustainability/driving-sustainable-marketing-with-data .				Leadership attributes and stakeholder management
https://www.ibm.com/case-studies/carhartt-turbonomic				Innovation
https://sustainabilitymag.com/sustainability/powerful-marketing-can-drive-a-sustainable-transformation				Developing transparency

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