

**Title: Strategic Management Report: A Comprehensive
Strategic Analysis of Unilever.**

Programme: Master of Business Administration

Module: Strategic Management

Module Code: LCMB7003

Student Name: Alima Niva

Student ID: 2431109

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Organisational Context and Overview	6
3. External and Internal Environment Analysis	8
3.1 External Environment Analysis (PESTEL Framework)	8
3.1.1 Political Factors	8
3.1.2 Economic Factors	9
3.1.3 Social Factors	9
3.1.4 Technological Factors	9
3.1.5 Environmental Factors	10
3.1.6 Legal Factors	10
3.2 Industry Challenges and Critical Success Factors	10
3.2.1 Industry Challenges	10
3.2.2 Critical Success Factors	11
3.3 Internal Environment Analysis	11
3.3.1 Resources	11
3.3.2 Capabilities	11
3.3.3 Core Competencies	12
3.4 VRIO Analysis	12
3.4.1 Value	12
3.4.2 Rarity	13
3.4.3 Imitability	13
3.4.4 Organisation	13
3.5 Internal Strengths and Competitive Advantage	13
4. CSR and Sustainability Objectives	14
4.1 Environmental Sustainability	14
4.2 Social Responsibility	14
4.3 Strategic Alignment	14
4.4 Critical Evaluation	15
5. Comprehensive and Holistic View: Balanced Scorecard	16
5.1 Financial Perspective	16
5.1.1 Objectives	16
5.1.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	16
5.1.3 Targets and Initiatives	17

5.2 Customer Perspective	17
5.2.1 Objectives	17
5.2.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	17
5.2.3 Targets and Initiatives	17
5.3 Internal Business Processes	17
5.3.1 Objectives	17
5.3.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	18
5.3.3 Targets and Initiatives	18
5.4 Learning and Growth Perspective	18
5.4.1 Objectives	18
5.4.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	18
5.4.3 Targets and Initiatives	18
5.5 Overall Evaluation of Balanced Scorecard	18
6. Strategic Choices and Implementation	20
6.1 Business-Level Strategy	20
6.2 Corporate-Level Strategy	20
6.3 Strategic Implementation	21
6.4 Change Management	21
6.5 Critical Evaluation of Strategic Choices	21
7. Strategic Evaluation and Recommendations	23
7.1 SWOT Analysis	23
7.1.1 Strengths	23
7.1.2 Weaknesses	24
7.1.3 Opportunities	24
7.1.4 Threats	24
7.2 Strategic Recommendations	24
7.3 Justification of Recommendations	25
8. Reflective Account (Gibbs Reflective Cycle)	26
8.1 Description	26
8.2 Feelings	26
8.3 Evaluation	27
8.4 Analysis	28
8.5 Conclusion	28
8.6 Action Plan	29

Reference List	30
----------------------	----

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Unilever Brand Portfolio Structure	6
Figure 2: PESTEL Framework	8
Figure 3: VRIO Analysis	12
Figure 4: Balanced Scorecard	16
Figure 5: SWOT Analysis	23
Figure 6: Gibbs Reflective Cycle	26

1. Introduction

The long-term success of organisations in a very competitive and dynamic global environment requires strategic management. This report is an analysis of Unilever, a multinational FMCG company, its organisational context, external and internal environment and sustainability strategy. The report analyses the ability of Unilever to remain competitive and respond to the dynamic environment in the market using some of its most important frameworks, namely, PESTEL and VRIO, as well as aligning the business objectives with sustainability.

2. Organisational Context and Overview

Unilever is a multinational consumer goods company based in London, United Kingdom, and has a history that goes back to 1929, after the merger of the Dutch margin company Margarine Unie and the British soap producer Lever Brothers (EBSCO, 2023). The company has transformed into among the largest fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) organisations in the world operating in over 190 countries and serving billions of consumers per day. It has a large range of popular brands, such as Dove, Lipton, Knorr, and Ben & Jerry, that belong to such categories as food, beverages, personal care, and home care (Unilever, 2022).

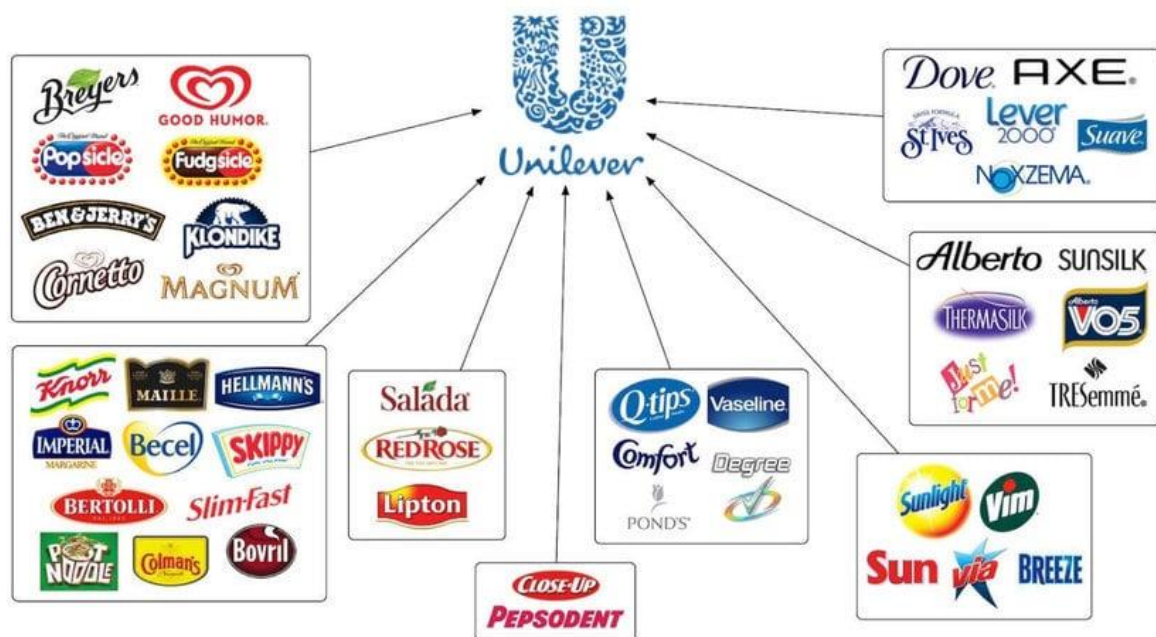


Figure 1: Unilever Brand Portfolio Structure

Source: (Gentjan, 2019)

Unilever mission focuses on making sustainable living a normal way of life and this reflects its efforts of ensuring that sustainability is incorporated in its business strategy. It has a vision to expand the business and minimize environmental impact and increase influence on positive social issues. This is engrained in its business model of high-volume production, global distribution, high branding and constant innovation in response to dynamic consumer needs (Sekar, 2024).

Unilever is in the FMCG industry that is highly competitive with high product turnover rates, high brand competition, and sensitivity to tastes and preferences of consumers. The key players in the industry are international companies like Procter and Gamble,

Nestle, and Colgate-Palmolive that compete in a similar range of products (Satti, 2025). Nevertheless, Unilever has managed to sustain a good market position due to its diversification in products and global presence as well as focus on sustainability as a differentiating factor.

Moreover, the strategic positioning of Unilever is also justified by the fact that it has the capacity to strike a balance between global scale and local responsiveness. The company also localizes their offerings to fit local markets with the same brand name. This has been a two-pronged strategy that empowers its competitiveness and strength in unstable international markets (Reza, 2020). All in all, Unilever is a well-established organisation that has a solid strategic basis, which makes it a suitable object of study of strategic management practices.

3. External and Internal Environment Analysis

3.1 External Environment Analysis (PESTEL Framework)

The macro environment is an important factor in influencing the strategic decision of Unilever. The PESTEL model offers a detailed study of the macro-environment issues affecting the organisation.

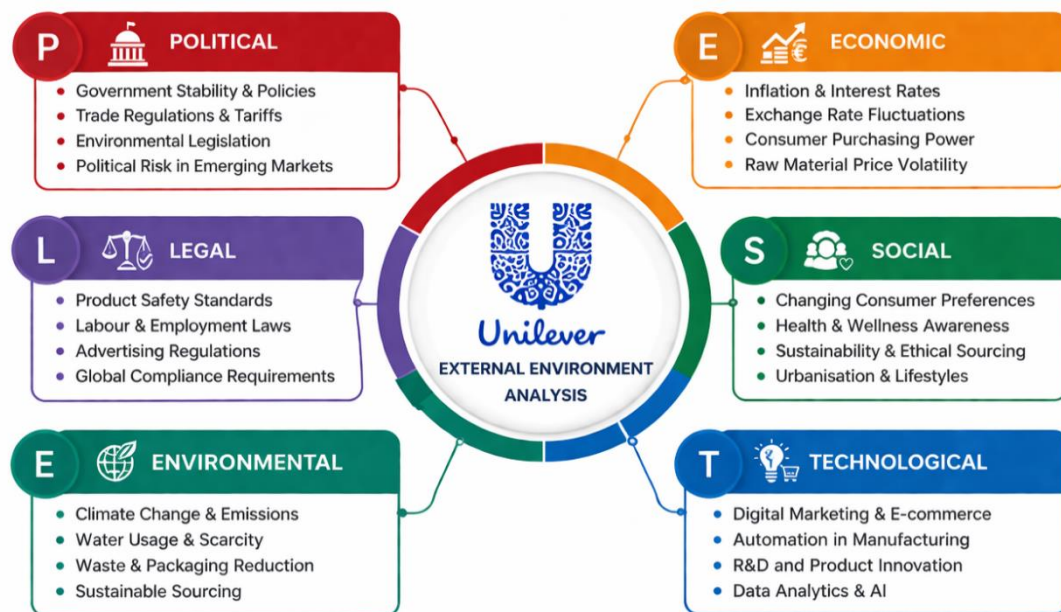


Figure 2: PESTEL Framework

Source: (Own)

3.1.1 Political Factors

Unilever has been operating in various political environments, and these environments have varied government policies, regulation needs and trade conditions. Efficient supply chains cannot be sustained without political stability because Unilever has operations in over 300 manufacturing plants throughout the world (Patil et al., 2022). Political instability in the emerging markets may upset the production, distribution, and access to the market.

The regulations by the government concerning protection and sustainability of the environment have been stricter. As an illustration, policies that limit plastic consumption and encourage the reduction of carbon demand that Unilever to re-design its packaging and invest in processes that are less pollutant. Sourcing decisions, cost structures depend on trade policies, tariffs and import restrictions as well and need strategic flexibility (Singh, 2025).

3.1.2 Economic Factors

Economic conditions have a great influence on the performance of Unilever as it is present on the global level. The company has a turnover of more than 60 billion Euros every year, which makes it quite sensitive to inflation, variations in exchange rates, and shifts in consumer purchasing power (KoalaGains, 2025).

Unilever is buying millions of tonnes of raw materials yearly, in form of agricultural products including palm oil and tea, and packaging materials. Product volatility of these inputs adds costs of production. However, in several emerging markets, where people have lower incomes, the company sells smaller sizes of products because it must be affordable (Igwe et al., 2024). Although the economic development in the developing world brings about growth opportunities, it also brings in risks of uncertainty around currency and changing demand.

3.1.3 Social Factors

Social trends are significantly relevant in the strategies of Unilever. The company needs to address emerging preferences and lifestyles with billions of consumers using its products every day (Ismaeel and Alsariera, 2023). The need towards products which are sustainable, ethically sourced, and healthy is in the increase.

Urbanisation has also caused a shift in the consumption trends where consumers are now demanding convenience and ready-to-use commodities. Moreover, younger customers emphasize on transparency and corporate responsibility and demand that Unilever concur its practices to social demands. There is also heightened demand on hygienic and wellness products due to promotion on the need to be healthy.

3.1.4 Technological Factors

The FMCG industry has also undergone changes due to technological progress especially in digital marketing, e-commerce, and supply chain management. Unilever has several research and development centres that help in the innovation of thousands of product formulations.

More than 300 production facilities are automated and equipped with advanced manufacturing technologies to enhance the efficiency and help in cost reduction. Data analytics and digital platforms help the company to learn the behaviour of the consumer and customise marketing approaches (Wunderlich et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, change in technology is very fast and therefore needs constant investment and adjustment.

3.1.5 Environmental Factors

Environmental sustainability is another major concern to Unilever owing to the magnitude of its operation. The company has a source of raw materials that is composed of millions of hectares of agricultural systems, which exposes it to climate change, water scarcity, and depletion of resources.

Unilever has taken measures to curb these challenges by establishing programs to cut greenhouse gas emissions, enhance water efficiency and create sustainable packaging to meet these challenges (Greenheroglobal, 2025). The actions will not only minimize environmental impact, but it will also increase operational resilience and brand reputation in the long run.

3.1.6 Legal Factors

Unilever must meet many legal obligations in various countries. These are the standards of product safety, labour standards, environmental laws, and the advertising laws. It needs effective systems and monitoring to handle compliance in thousands of product variations.

Non-adherence to the legal standards may lead to the fines, recall of products, and destruction of a good image. Hence, legal compliance is an important element of the strategic management of Unilever (Chowdhury, 2025).

3.2 Industry Challenges and Critical Success Factors

3.2.1 Industry Challenges

FMCG industry is highly competitive and there are many international and regional competitors in the industry dealing in the same line of products. Unilever handles a portfolio of hundreds of brands most of which head-on with competing products in the same retail store. The cost of switching is low, which implies that customers can easily replace one brand with another, which makes differentiation more important (Raisanen, 2024).

Increasing the cost of inputs such as raw materials and transportation have been a persistent problem. Also, the necessity to achieve the sustainability standards will

demand significant investment in the redesign of the packaging, transformation of the supply chain, and product innovation. These are factors that make operations more difficult and strain profit margins.

3.2.2 Critical Success Factors

To survive in this competitive environment, organizations need to attain good brand recognition and have effective supply chain networks that can deliver merchandise to millions of retail stores all over the world. Novelty is mandatory because the companies must constantly develop new products and enhance the old ones to correspond to the fluctuating tastes of the consumers (Holloway, 2024).

The sustainability became one of the main success factors, as consumers want to buy products of companies, which are environmentally and socially responsible. Marketing and online communication also play a vital role in keeping the brand visible and satisfying the loyalty of the customers.

3.3 Internal Environment Analysis

3.3.1 Resources

Unilever also has the resources financially and annually revenues of more than 60 billion and operation across hundreds of manufacturing facilities. The company has more than 100,000 employees across the world and this has offered the company a rich and talented workforce contributing to both innovation and efficiency of operation (Unilever, 2025).

The advanced technological systems and online platforms are technological resources that allow efficient production and distribution. The company has a wide-reaching supply chain linking suppliers, manufacturers and retailers in various continents.

3.3.2 Capabilities

The competencies that Unilever has are its ability to operate numerous brands, each of which is segmented into a particular market and consumer. The network of distribution in the world market is such that the products are sold in millions of retail stores including large supermarkets and small local shops.

The marketing competence of the firm enables it to enjoy a good brand recognition in the various markets. Also, it is more competitive thanks to its innovation and localizing products to local tastes (Melibaeva, 2024).

3.3.3 Core Competencies

The company has such core competencies as brand portfolio, supply chain management, and sustainability. The company deals with hundreds of product lines, and each of them is backed by the substantial marketing and distribution initiatives (Leelawati et al., 2025). Its capability of incorporating sustainability into its operations also isolates it even more compared to its rivals.

3.4 VRIO Analysis

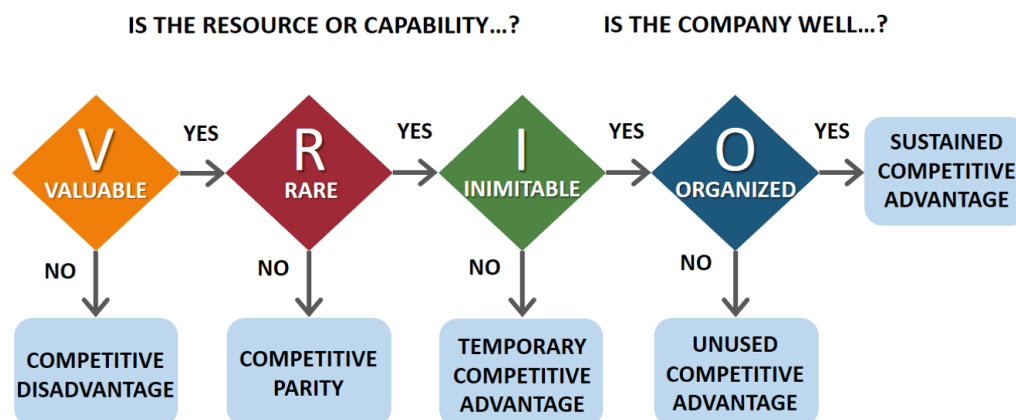


Figure 3: VRIO Analysis

Source: (Bruin, 2018)

3.4.1 Value

The resources and capabilities of Unilever pose significant value by making the company address the demands of an estimated 3.4 billion consumers every day. Its robust global portfolio of its globally recognised brands means its products have consistent quality, reliability, and accessibility (Dube and Dube, 2023). Besides, its effective supply chain and innovation competencies enable the company to act to the fluctuating preferences of consumers and market demands.

3.4.2 Rarity

Unilever is a relatively large company, in terms of reach (operating in over 190 countries) and brand management (it handles hundreds of brands), which is relatively uncommon in the FMCG sector (Binti et al., 2023). This capability to integrate both global access and local market orientation gives it a distinct competitive edge that cannot be easily replicated by most of its competitors.

3.4.3 Imitability

Competitors can easily imitate certain products or even marketing strategies; however, they will need considerable money and time to imitate the whole system of integrated operations, brand equity, and global distribution network of Unilever. The long-term relationships that the company has with suppliers and customers also make the imitation harder.

3.4.4 Organisation

Unilever is structured in a manner that it can make good use of its resources. The organization of its management systems, digitalization, and coordinated operations around the globe guarantee the alignment between strategic goals and operational performance (Toldbod and Laursen, 2024).

3.5 Internal Strengths and Competitive Advantage

The competitive advantage that Unilever has is because of its capacity to use its resources and capabilities effectively at the global scale. The company enjoys the benefits of reaching a wide market with a variety of customers since it is present in over 190 countries. This large penetration makes it stronger in the market (Oyededeji, 2025).

Another strength of the company is strong brand portfolio. Established brands make consumers trust and be loyal, which allows the product to be in demand in various geographical locations. Besides that, the integrated supply chain provides Unilever with efficient production and distribution, which guarantees the availability of products.

These strengths enable Unilever to be a high-quality product and high-quality operation company. Nevertheless, to maintain such advantage, numerous innovations and adjustments to the evolving consumer preferences and growing competition in the FMCG market are needed (Tibokbe and Shankar, 2025).

4. CSR and Sustainability Objectives

4.1 Environmental Sustainability

Unilever has made environmental sustainability a part of its corporate strategy to show the magnitude of its activities in the world. The company has over 300 manufacturing stations and its yearly output of products units in billions makes the environmental footprint stand high. To counter this, Unilever has undertaken efforts to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, enhance water efficiency, and come up with sustainable packaging (Sim, King and Price, 2020). These are meant to reduce the environmental impact which in turn will reduce the long-term availability of resources. To illustration, the firm has been investing in supply chain innovation and alternative material to limit reliance on non-renewable resources.

4.2 Social Responsibility

Unilever CSR strategy is not limited to issues of the environment, but it is also highly socially committed. The organization has millions of smallholder farmers and suppliers in its global value chain, which benefits livelihood and enhances the employment of ethical sourcing practices. Moreover, Unilever has more than 100,000 employees across the world, and it puts stress on diversity, inclusion, and employee growth (Leelawati et al., 2025). Such efforts lead to the development of positive organisational culture and improve stakeholder trust. The company also participates in the public health and hygiene programmes and reaches extensive populations and supports the social impact.

4.3 Strategic Alignment

The critical advantage of the CSR strategy by Unilever is that it is built into the general business model. The financial performance is in line with sustainability goals, and therefore the company can generate value to shareholders and the society. Sustainable product innovation does not only seal unfriendly environmental issues but also satisfies the increasing consumer demand thus facilitating revenue generation and loyalty.

4.4 Critical Evaluation

Despite an effective CSR structure, Unilever experiences problems in balancing sustainability investment and profitability. Its worldwide operations are extensive and complicated, and they are hard to implement especially in different markets. Moreover, the growing demands of stakeholders demand more openness and accountability (Tan, 2025). Hence, monitoring and constant improvement is indispensable in terms of preserving the credibility and addressing long-term success.

5. Comprehensive and Holistic View: Balanced Scorecard

Balanced Scorecard framework offers an overall method of assessing the performance of an organisation based on the combination of financial and non-financial measures.



Figure 4: Balanced Scorecard

Source: (Thestrategyinstitute, 2024)

5.1 Financial Perspective

5.1.1 Objectives

The Unilever financial goals are directed at the realization of the sustainable increase in revenues and profitability without excluding the investments in long-term projects, including innovation and sustainability. The annual revenues of the company exceeding 60 billion, the company should provide financial performance that contributes to further growth and competencies.

5.1.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The major financial indicators will be the total revenue, operating profit, cost of goods sold, and return on investment. Since the company has such an enormous operation, a slight variation in its cost structure or pricing policy may have a high financial cost (Istan et al., 2021).

5.1.3 Targets and Initiatives

Unilever intends to enhance cost effectiveness by looking at supply chain optimisation and operational efficiency of its global chain of manufacturing plants. Some of the strategic efforts are restructuring of the portfolio, in which the poorly performing brands are sold off, and the resources are invested in the areas of significant growth. Long term financial performance is also maintained through investment in research and development which leads to innovation.

5.2 Customer Perspective

5.2.1 Objectives

The customer view of the Unilever Company targets to increase brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and market penetration. The company must ensure that it has good relations with a wide range of customers, serving 3.4 billion consumers per day (Chakraborty and Jain, 2022).

5.2.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs would be brand recognition, retention of customers, frequency of product use and penetration in the market. The company keeps track of consumer responses and buying trends to evaluate performance.

5.2.3 Targets and Initiatives

Unilever puts a lot of marketing and brand building to stay at the competitive level. Examples of such initiatives are the introduction of new products, product quality, and sustainability. There is also a growing use of digital platforms to communicate with consumers directly to improve the customer experience and brand interaction.

5.3 Internal Business Processes

5.3.1 Objectives

The internal business process viewpoint looks at enhancing efficiency, innovation and quality of products. Unilever has more than 300 manufacturing plants and therefore the operations have to be streamlined and cost effective.

5.3.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

These KPIs are production efficiency, supply chain performance, new product time-to-market, and waste reduction. These indicators are used to gauge the performance of operational processes (Yurtay et al., 2023).

5.3.3 Targets and Initiatives

Unilever strives to streamline its supply chain with the wider use of modern logistics and digital technologies. The continuous improvement programme is used to improve the productivity and decrease operational expenses. The company is optimally concerned with the quick product development to address the needs of consumers that change very fast.

5.4 Learning and Growth Perspective

5.4.1 Objectives

The learning and growth are the perspective that focuses on the development of the employees, the organisational culture, and innovations. Unilever employs more than 100,000 people, thus the need to invest in human capital is realised.

5.4.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs involve the participation of the employees in training, employee engagement, output of innovations, and training of the leaders. Such indicators are indicative of the sustainability at the long-term growth of the organisation.

5.4.3 Targets and Initiatives

Unilever also makes an investment in training programmes, leadership development programmes, and development of digital skills to equip employees to face future challenges. Another culture practiced by the company is the culture of innovation where employees are encouraged to come up with new ideas and solutions (Shahid, 2024).

5.5 Overall Evaluation of Balanced Scorecard

Balanced Scorecard assists Unilever in matching financial and non-financial goals to help it to achieve long-term success. It combines various performance indicators within the organisation. This system is however hard to manage on a global level because

of coordination problem. Nevertheless, it is still a useful performance and strategic alignment tool.

6. Strategic Choices and Implementation

The strategic decisions define the positioning of Unilever in the international FMCG market and the resources it would use to gain a competitive advantage. The company has more than 300 manufacturing facilities across more than 190 countries and it needs to be efficient globally yet responsive to the local market and maintain its innovation and sustainability.

6.1 Business-Level Strategy

Unilever is a differentiation firm, which provides quality, innovative, and sustainable products in hundreds of brands. This will help the company to stand out in a very competitive environment. The key element of this strategy is product innovation, which is enhanced by research and development centres to constantly alternate and add new products (Jain et al., 2021). These products are usually based on environmental sustainability, health, and convenience, which are in line with the emerging trends of consumers.

This strategy is also supported by good brand recognition. The brand is well-known, and Unilever products are trusted by billions of customers, which increases customer loyalty and decreases price sensitivity. But to remain differentiated, one must keep investing in marketing, innovations, and sustainability efforts.

6.2 Corporate-Level Strategy

Unilever operates under diversification and international expansion strategies at the corporate level. The company has several segments in its operations, such as food, personal and home care; this limits the risk and enables it to cater to a wide range of consumer segments. Economies of scale are also achieved by diversification because there will be a common pool of resources like supply chains and distribution networks.

A major pace of growth is international expansion. Unilever operates in more than 190 countries, and this gives it an opportunity to explore new markets and most notably the emerging economies. The company follows the policy of adaptation to the localities, adjusting the products according to the regional tastes and keeping the global brands of the products, which increases the competitiveness (Alamandi, 2025).

6.3 Strategic Implementation

Strategy implementation involves good coordination of world operations. Unilever combines the production, marketing and distribution of their activities with the strategic goals. Digital systems and data analytics are used to facilitate decision-making and provide an opportunity to monitor performance in real-time.

The organization has also shown that it has good change management especially in the implementation of sustainability projects and the digital transformation. A workforce of over 100,000 employees is a challenge to manage change, however, at Unilever, it is done by developing leaders, training them, and communicating effectively.

6.4 Change Management

Unilever has shown that they can cope with organisational change especially in reaction to sustainability pressures and technological changes. The shift into greener practices has necessitated alterations to production processes, supply chain management and organisational culture.

There are challenges of managing change in the workforce of more than 100,000 employees, such as resistance to change and cultural differences across regions. To overcome these difficulties, Unilever believes in leadership development, employee training and communication strategies that focus on the value of strategic goals (Cardona and Rey, 2022).

The issue of change adaptability is one of the factors that make the company successful in the long term. Unilever can react to the external pressures by developing a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

6.5 Critical Evaluation of Strategic Choices

The strategic decisions made by Unilever have worked towards ensuring that the company has remained competitive. The differentiation strategy upholds the high brand identity and innovation, and the company will be able to make its mark in the competitive market. The diversification and internationalization also develop growth opportunities and management of risks.

Nevertheless, the strategies are also more complex in terms of operations and need considerable resources. The company is also exposed to economic and political risks in foreign countries, especially in the emerging markets (Don and Ali, 2024). Moreover, deciding on the sustainability programs and financial performance are the major issues. Constant review and revision is thus the only way to maintain a success in the long term.

7. Strategic Evaluation and Recommendations

The strategic analysis can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies that are used by an organisation now and to find the areas where they can be improved. In the case of Unilever, strategic frameworks like SWOT analysis and Matrix offered by Ansoff will be of good insight into the current strategic position of the company.

7.1 SWOT Analysis



Figure 5: SWOT Analysis

Source: (Own)

7.1.1 Strengths

The strengths of Unilever are its worldwide presence, good brand portfolio and wide supply chain. The company can be found in more than 190 countries and catering to around 3.4 billion consumers daily, thus reaching a large market base (BrandSensitize, 2025). It has hundreds of brands under its portfolio, which makes it serve various needs of consumers and have a competitive edge.

7.1.2 Weaknesses

The company struggles with the issues of the complexity of the operations and the high costs. The fact that it employs more than 100,000 workers and has operations in many regions only adds to the administrative and operational issues (Kuhn, Meijerink and Keegan, 2021). Also, reliance on the developing markets presents the business to economic instability.

7.1.3 Opportunities

Growth opportunities that Unilever has are the growing demand on sustainable products and the development of digital technologies. The emergence of online shopping platforms can help the company to connect directly with consumers and enhance customer interaction (Singh and Vij, 2020).

The potential of emerging markets is also there because of rising population and urbanisation. Unilever can grow in these areas to boost its sales and market share.

7.1.4 Threats

FMCG market is very competitive, and both the global and local rivalry is high. Demand and profitability can be affected by economic volatility (especially emerging markets). Also, there is continuous pressure due to the rising regulatory demands concerning sustainability and product safety.

7.2 Strategic Recommendations

1. Strengthening Digital Transformation: Unilever must go on investing on digital technologies to enhance efficiency in operations and customer interaction. The company can improve its marketing plans by utilizing more of its data analytics, artificial intelligence, and e-business platforms to improve the understanding of consumer behaviour. Digital transformation also allows managing supply chain and decision-making more efficiently.

2. Enhancing Cost Efficiency: Cost effectiveness can be improved in a small way, and this can lead to considerable financial gains, considering the size of its operations. Unilever needs to pay attention to its supply chain optimization, waste minimization, and enhanced production processes in its worldwide system of manufacturing plants. The effect of increasing the cost of inputs and economic volatility can be alleviated through streamlining operations (Naveen, 2024).

3. Expanding Sustainable Innovation: Unilever must keep investing in sustainable products and packaging solutions development. The company can use its current capabilities and resources to become a stronger sustainability leader. This is not only satisfying the consumer demand but also compliant to the regulatory requirement and brand image.

4. Simplifying Organisational Structure: Dealing with a large and complex organisation is quite challenging. Unilever ought to also think of streamlining its organisation to enhance the speed in decision making and operational efficiency. This may include the minimization of the product lines or simplifying the management procedures of the different regions.

5. Strengthening Presence in Emerging Markets: The emerging markets are a great potential growth market because of rising population and urbanisation. Unilever ought to have increased operation in such regions and adjust its products and pricing strategies to the local situations. One of the ways to win the attention of more customers is by offering cheaper forms of products (Uloma et al., 2024).

7.3 Justification of Recommendations

The recommendations proposed conform to the strategic management theories and respond to the major problems that have been recognized during the analysis. Digital transformation increases efficiency and helps in engaging customers, whereas cost efficiency increases profitability. Sustainable innovation helps in differentiation, and this is one way in which Unilever can be distinguished in the competitive market.

The growth of the business in new markets complies with growth policies and promotes development in the long-term. Streamlining of organisational structure overcomes internal weaknesses and enhances efficiency of operation. The combination of these suggestions gives a holistic solution to the enhancement of the strategic position of Unilever.

8. Reflective Account (Gibbs Reflective Cycle)



Figure 6: Gibbs Reflective Cycle

Source: (Simply Psychology, 2024)

8.1 Description

This assignment entailed a thorough strategic analysis of Unilever which is a multinational FMCG organisation that is present in over 190 countries. Several strategic management tools, such as PESTEL, VRIO, and Balanced Scorecard, SWOT analysis, and the Matrix proposed by Ansoff, had to be used to complete the task. This was aimed at assessing both the external and internal environment of the company, the competitive position, and the strategic recommendations.

The process sought to start with the collection of information concerning the operation of Unilever, market position, and sustainability activities. This was then accompanied using theoretical models to study various characteristics of the organisation. Another task that was associated with the assignment was the arrangement of the report correctly and academically and its clarity and meaning throughout.

8.2 Feelings

The start of the assignment was seen as complex and challenging because there was a large variety of frameworks and in-depth analysis that was needed. It was not easy

to know which model should be applied to a real-life organisation. It was also rather unclear how to organize the report in a good way and meet the academic standards.

Nonetheless, confidence grew as the research went on. Familiarizing oneself with the frameworks and observing their interrelationship assisted in understanding the concepts of strategic management in a better way. This process was made more interesting as I started to realise how theoretical models could be implemented to real life business scenarios. Towards the later parts of the assignment, I was more at ease with the analysis of the organisation and presentation of findings in a systematic manner.

8.3 Evaluation

Probably the key asset of this assignment was the possibility to apply the theoretical knowledge to an actual organisation. This contributed to the advancement of my knowledge in strategic management concepts and their use in practice. Applications of frameworks like PESTEL and VRIO enabled us to analyse the external and internal factors in a structured manner whereas the Balanced Scorecard gave us a broad perspective on the organisational performance.

The other encouraging thing was that it helped in the development of research and analytical skills. The task demanded the collection of data with the usage of various materials, its assessment, and incorporation into a coherent examine. This enhanced my skills in recognizing the most important information and efficiently employing it to defend the points (Ayala, Fuertes and Jarrin, 2024).

My capacity to organize academic writing was also improved through the assignment. The report was well organised, with well-identified sections, and a logic flow that enhanced the clarity and readability of the report. The academic style of writing also enhanced my communication skills.

Nonetheless, weaknesses were also present. The time constraint was also a big issue through the research, analysis, and writing process was necessary to plan. I wasted a lot of time in specific areas in some instances, and that influenced the general performance of the process. Moreover, it was not an easy task to hold a critical point of view throughout the assignment because it was easy to concentrate on the descriptive text instead of the analysis (Addis et al., 2023).

8.4 Analysis

This assignment has brought out the role of strategic analysis in the interpretation of how organisations attain and maintain competitive advantage. The use of the PESTEL model showed the effect of external forces like political policies, the economic environment, and technology on organisational decisions. As an example, the reaction to environmental policies and sustainability trends demonstrated by Unilever revealed that companies should adjust to the external demands (Arslan, Wang and Rahman, 2025).

The VRIO framework gave an understanding of the contribution made by internal resources and capabilities towards competitive advantage. It was understood that the strong brand portfolio of Unilever, the network of distribution facilities all over the world, and sustainability programs are determinants that make it outstanding among the rivals. These are not only valuable resources, but also hard to counterfeit and this makes the company even stronger in terms of strategy.

The Balanced Scorecard also highlighted the need to have financial and non-financial measures of performance. It revealed the role of customer satisfaction, internal processes, and employee development to organisational success in general. This integration contributed to the concept that financial performance is not enough to measure the effectiveness of a company (Sariani, 2025).

This analysis made me realise that strategic management is an ongoing process that demands organisations to keep up with changes. Businesses have a need to review their plans on a regular basis and make amendments to keep up with the competition. The critical thinking was also an essential part of this assignment because merely using frameworks is not sufficient, and results should be interpreted and meaningful conclusions drawn.

8.5 Conclusion

Overall, this assignment was a productive learning process as it helped me to improve my level of knowledge about strategic management. It also gave a chance to apply the theory to a real organisation which enhanced analytical and research skills. Despite the issues connected to time management and information organisation, the mentioned issues helped to form problem-solving skills.

The assignment also gave me confidence in working with strategic tools and presenting the results in an academic format. It made it clear that proper analysis and effective communication are necessary in creation of effective reports. This has seen me gain a better ground in strategic management concepts.

8.6 Action Plan

In future assignments, I will make sure that I am more pragmatic in time management and planning. Beginning the research process would enable more time of analysis and critical analysis. Another objective I will strive to achieve is to learn more in a close interaction with academic sources to enhance the quality of arguments and analysis using the supporting evidence.

Secondly, I will also concentrate on improving my critical thinking abilities by becoming more critical about information instead of the descriptive analysis. The enhancement of the structure and coherence of the reports will also be in the agenda as well to make sure that every section is logically related.

Lastly, I will be practicing the use of strategic frameworks to various organisations since it will also enhance my skills in ability to analyse intricate business scenarios.

Reference List

- Addis, B.A., Gelaw, Y.M., Eyowas, F.A., Bogale, T.W., Aynalem, Z.B. and Guadie, H.A. (2023). 'Time wasted by health professionals is time not invested in patients': time management practice and associated factors among health professionals at public hospitals in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia: a multicenter mixed method study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, [online] 11. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1159275>.
- Alamandi, M. (2025). Sustainable Innovation Management: Balancing Economic Growth and Environmental Responsibility. *Sustainability*, [online] 17(10), p.4362. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17104362>.
- Arslan, A.M., Wang, H. and Rahman, A.U. (2025). Exploring the Relationship between Adaptive Organizational Behavior, Innovation, and Employee Mental Health: A Case Study of Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, [online] 13(01), pp.40–52. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2025.131003>.
- Ayala, E., Fuertes, W. and Jarrin, F. (2024). Critical Thinking Skills in Research Process, a Literature Review. An Input to Propose a New Measurement Instrument to Gauge Critical Thinking. *International journal of religion*, 5(11), pp.1–14. doi: <https://doi.org/10.61707/pwy5df19>.
- Binti Tsuraya, H., Endayani, L., Monivatu Zahda, F., Shintya Utami, I. and Jayadi, U. (2023). Unilever Company Work Model. *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting (IJEMA)*, [online] 1(1), pp.7–14. doi: <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijema.v1i1.26>.
- BrandSensitize. (2025). *Unilever: Developing Consistency & Better Performance*. [online] Available at: <https://brandsensitize.com/unilever-developing-consistency-better-performance/>
- Bruin, L. de (2018). *VRIO Framework EXPLAINED with EXAMPLES | B2U*. [online] B2U - Business-to-you.com. Available at: <https://www.business-to-you.com/vrio-from-firm-resources-to-competitive-advantage/>

- Cardona, P. and Rey, C. (2022). Correction to: The Values of a Balanced Culture. *Management by Missions*, [online] pp.C1–C3. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83780-8_10.
- Chakraborty, A. and Jain, V. (2022). Leveraging Digital Marketing and Integrated Marketing Communications for Brand Building in Emerging Markets. *Palgrave Studies of Marketing in Emerging Economies*, [online] pp.281–305. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88678-3_13.
- Chowdhury, A.R. (2025). A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF RISK-BASED PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES IN RETAIL SUPPLY CHAINS: SOURCING FLEXIBILITY AND VENDOR DISRUPTION MANAGEMENT. *American Journal of Advanced Technology and Engineering Solutions*, 1(1), pp.466–505. doi: <https://doi.org/10.63125/jr03rv07>.
- Don, L. and Ali, A. (2024). *International Business Strategy: Adapting to Political Risks in Emerging Markets*. [online] Researchgate. doi: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.33802.79040>.
- Dube, M. and Dube, S. (2023). *Towards Sustainable Cosmetics Packaging*. [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372911226_Towards_Sustainable_Cosmetics_Packaging.
- EBSCO. (2023). *Unilever | Business and Management | Research Starters | EBSCO Research*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/business-and-management/unilever>
- Gentjan Ulaj (2019). IMPORTANCE OF MODE OF ENTRY DECISIONS ON INTERNATIONAL BRANDING CASE STUDY ARCELIK A.S. COMPANY. *ResearchGate*. [online] doi: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34016.51204>.
- Greenheroglobal. (2025). *Unilever: Leading the Charge Toward Sustainability - Green Hero Global*. [online] Available at: <https://greenheroglobal.com/en/news-interviews/news/unilever-leading-the-charge-toward-sustainability>
- Heubel, M. (2021). *PESTLE Analysis: The Macro-Environmental Analysis Explained*. [online] Consulterce. Available at: <https://consulterce.com/pestle-analysis/>

- Holloway, S. (2024). The Role of Supply Chain Collaboration in Enhancing Marketing Effectiveness. [online] doi: <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202406.1344.v1>.
- Igwe, A.N., Nsiongw Louis Eyo-Udo, Adekunle Toromade and Adewale, T.T. (2024). Strategies for Mitigating Food Pricing Volatility: Enhancing Cost Affordability Through Sustainable Supply... *International Journal of Science and Engineering Invention*, [online] 13(9), pp.151–163. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387955332_Strategies_for_Mitigating_Food_Pricing_Volatility_Enhancing_Cost_Affordability_Through_Sustainable_Supply_Chain_Practices.
- Ismaeel, B. and Alsariera, W. (2023). The Effect of Marketing Effectiveness, and Consumer Behaviour on Consumer Purchase Preference for Unilever Products in Jordan. *International journal of academic research in business & social sciences*, 13(7). doi: <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v13-i7/17416>.
- Istan, M., Husainah, N., Murniyanto, M., Suganda, A.D., Siswanti, I. and Fahlevi, M. (2021). The effects of production and operational costs, capital structure and company growth on the profitability: Evidence from manufacturing industry. *Accounting*, [online] 7(7), pp.1725–1730. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ac.2021.4.025>.
- Jain, P., Chou, M.C., Fan, F. and Santoso, M.P. (2021). Embedding Sustainability in the Consumer Goods Innovation Cycle and Enabling Tools to Measure Progress and Capabilities. *Sustainability*, [online] 13(12), p.6662. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126662>.
- KoalaGains (2025). *Unilever PLC (UL) Stock Analysis & Investment Report*. [online] KoalaGains. Available at: <https://koalagains.com/stocks/NYSE/UL>
- Kuhn, K.M., Meijerink, J. and Keegan, A. (2021). Human Resource Management and the Gig Economy: Challenges and Opportunities at the Intersection between Organizational HR Decision-Makers and Digital Labor Platforms. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, [online] pp.1–46. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/s0742-730120210000039001>.
- Leelawati, Ashu, Leena, Jasdeep and Singh, A. (2025). Unilever's Ethical Decision-Making In CSR And Sustainable Business Practices. *International Journal of*

- Environmental Sciences*, [online] pp.1427–1441. doi: <https://doi.org/10.64252/qtK0xs69>.
- Melibaeva, G.N. (2024). THE IMPACT OF MARKETING INNOVATIONS ON COMPETITIVENESS. *QO'QON UNIVERSITETI XABARNOMASI*, 12, pp.39–43. doi: <https://doi.org/10.54613/ku.v12i.985>.
- Naveen Salunke (2024). Cost Optimization in Supply Chain Management Leveraging Vendor Development and Sourcing Strategies. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, [online] 6(5), pp.225–237. doi: <https://doi.org/10.32996/jbms.2024.6.5.24>.
- Oyedeeji, M.A. (2025). Strategic Business Operations and Competitive Positioning of Unilever: A Case Study Analysis. *Iconic Research And Engineering Journals*, [online] 8(9), pp.1466–1474. Available at: <https://www.irejournals.com/paper-details/1707590>
- Patil, V., Tan, T., Rispens, S., Dabadghao, S. and Demerouti, E. (2022). Supplier sustainability: A comprehensive review and future research directions. *Sustainable Manufacturing and Service Economics*, [online] 1, p.100003. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smse.2022.100003>.
- Räsänen, S. (2024). Exploring Consumer Preferences in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) E-commerce-Case Study. *ResearchGate*. [online] doi: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24728.40964>.
- Reza, M.H. (2020). *Marketing Strategy and Sustainable Plan of Unilever*. [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343539636_Marketing_Strategy_and_Sustainable_Plan_of_Unilever.
- Sariani, S. (2025). The Effect of Balanced Scorecard Implementation on Financial and Non-Financial Performance. *Dhana*, 2(4), pp.30–37. doi: <https://doi.org/10.62872/s8cy7a40>.
- Satti, L.F. (2025). *Strategic Marketing and Competitive Positioning in the FMCG Sector: A Case Study on Unilever*. [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/393065292_Strategic_Marketing_and

d Competitive Positioning in the FMCG Sector A Case Study on Unilever.

- Sekar, N. (2024). *Unilever — Building Purpose in an Organization*. [online] Medium. Available at: <https://medium.com/@nareshnavinash/unilever-building-purpose-in-an-organization-b530df756018>
- Shahid, A. (2024). Transformational Leadership: Are Leaders Open to a New ‘CALL’? Challenges, Adaptation, Leadership and Learning. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, [online] 12(06), pp.3806–3822. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2024.126190>.
- Sim, S., King, H. and Price, E. (2020). The Role of Science in Shaping Sustainable Business: Unilever Case Study. *Taking Stock of Industrial Ecology*, [online] pp.291–302. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20571-7_15.
- Simply Psychology. (2024). *Gibbs Reflective Cycle*. [online] Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/gibbs-reflective-cycle.html>
- Singh, G. and Vij, S. (2020). Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Emerging Markets: Innovations and Strategies. *ResearchGate*, [online] pp.24–45. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14547276>.
- Singh, R.K. (2025). Impact of net-zero policies on supply chain sustainability: mediating role of green technology adoption. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, [online] 30(5), pp.552–565. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/scm-06-2025-0505>.
- Tan, K.H. (2025). Integrating Sustainability into the Corporate Strategy: A Critical Analysis of Unilever’s Sustainable... *ResearchGate*. [online] doi: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20946.47040>.
- Thestrategyinstitute. (2024). *A Comprehensive Guide to Implementing the Balanced Scorecard Framework*. [online] Available at: <https://www.thestrategyinstitute.org/insights/a-comprehensive-guide-to-implementing-the-balanced-scorecard-framework>
- Tibokbe, V.P. and Shankar, S.I. (2025). The Usefulness of Emerging Technologies in the FMCG Industry (Underdeveloped Markets). *American Journal of Industrial*

- and Business Management*, [online] 15(02), pp.292–314. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ajibm.2025.152015>.
- Toldbod, T. and Laursen, L.N. (2024). Time and the sequential integration of management controls in open innovation between Unilever and its partners: A procedural perspective. *Management Accounting Research*, [online] 65, p.100901. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mar.2024.100901>.
- Uloma Stella Nwabekee, Oluwatosin Yetunde Abdul-Azeez, Edith Ebele Agu and Tochukwu Ignatius Ijomah (2024). Brand management and market expansion in emerging economies: A comparative analysis. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*, [online] 6(9), pp.2913–2939. doi: <https://doi.org/10.51594/ijmer.v6i9.1531>.
- Unilever. (2022). *Unilever International celebrates a decade of growth | Unilever*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unilever.com/news/news-search/2022/unilever-international-celebrates-decade-of-consistent-growth-serving-the-underserved/>
- Unilever. (2025). *Annual Report and Accounts 2025 | Unilever*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unilever.com/investors/annual-report-and-accounts/>
- Wunderlich, N.V., Blut, M., Brock, C., Heirati, N., Jensen, M., Paluch, S., Rötzmeier-Keuper, J. and Tóth, Z. (2025). How to use emerging service technologies to enhance customer centricity in business-to-business contexts: A conceptual framework and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, [online] 192, p.115284. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.115284>.
- Yurtay, Y., Yurtay, N., Demirci, H., Zaimoglu, E.A. and Göksu, A. (2023). Improvement and Implementation of Sustainable Key Performance Indicators in Supply Chain Management: The Case of a Furniture Firm. *IEEE Access*, 11, pp.41913–41927. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2023.3271138>.