Chapter 11
Green Leadership in Strategic Brand Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to delineate the importance of green leadership in strategic brand management. However, by applying the theory of coevolution and multi-level perspective, the authors have developed a model with dependent and independent variables and explained the causal relationship between green leadership and strategic brand management in Unilever. Moreover, they have used the qualitative data collection method to conduct the research because the factors which are related to green leadership are not possible to measure by number, i.e., not quantifiable. The findings of the study conclude that Unilever is the number 1 company that has been following green leadership for a very long time and also moving forward for more innovations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green leadership is an emerging concept within the field of brand management. It is a way of thinking that encourages companies to take responsibility for their environmental impact and to make positive internal and external changes to create a sustainable future. Moreover, green leadership focuses on the long-term sustainability of a brand rather than short-term gains, and it can be applied to any organization, regardless of size or industry. This type of leadership incorporates sustainability into every aspect of a company's operations, from product design to marketing and corporate social responsibility. Unilever recently completed an international survey that found that 33% of customers now choose products based on their social and environmental effects. Additionally, there is a potential market worth €966 billion for companies that disclose their ecological credentials (Planteria Group). Green leadership can help organizations become more competitive, improve their brand image, and build customer loyalty by prioritizing sustainability and setting a positive example for other companies.

Green leadership in business is a significant development that changes how organizations run and engage with their environment. It entails using sustainable practices and methods to ensure that compa-

nies may lessen their environmental impact while still offering their clients products and services. On the other hand, being a proactive leader in sustainability enhances reputation. It fosters customer trust, which may increase sales and ensure the company's long-term success (Sarah long, 2022). Also, Green leadership is concerned with boosting resource efficiency and effectiveness, environmental performance, and enterprises' social and environmental impact. Although just 60% of firms have a sustainability strategy, 90% of CEOs agree that sustainability is essential (World Economic Forum,2022). Nevertheless, understanding and embracing green leadership is crucial for businesses if they want to sustain their financial viability and competitiveness in the long run.

By integrating sustainability into brand management, a company can ensure that its fundamental principles are represented in its products, services, and operations. In addition to creating sustainable products (goods and services) and implementing social-ecological criteria, companies can promote sustainable lifestyles and behavioral changes, mainly via critical reflection and modifying current norms (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019). There are numerous theoretical approaches to the study of brand sustainability, including one that has yet to be applied very much to look at sustainability tactics from a marketing viewpoint (Voola et al., 2022).

Unilever is a market leader in the production and sale of consumer goods, and its product line spans a variety of markets, including those for food, health, beauty, and personal care. Due to its dedication to sustainability and social responsibility, Unilever has developed a reputation as a trustworthy and forward-thinking business. The mission of Unilever is to improve people's lives and the environment while offering its customers high-quality, ethically sourced goods and services. Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) illustrates how a business complies with sustainability requirements (Mutia Khairunnisa, 2021). USLP helps to promote profitable development for its brands, save money, and foster innovation, serving as the company's model for long-term success in an unstable environment. The company has saved over €1 billion by implementing the USLP, partly due to advances in factory water and energy efficiency and the adoption of circular packaging solutions through collaborations with Algramo and Loop (Sustainable Brands, 2020).

Unilever has promised to make all its plastic and packaging 100% reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025 and is a founder signatory to the UK Plastics Pact (Esgn Asia, 2019). For packaging to be recognized by recycling plant scanners and processed for recycling, Unilever has invented a new detectable black pigment as part of the multinational's UK and Ireland "Get Plastic Wise" campaign (Lucy Whitehouse,2019). The new approach was created as part of

Unilever UK's dedication to The UK Plastics Pact and its new "Get Plastic Wise" campaign, a five-point plastics strategy that seeks to address plastic waste in the UK (Sustainable Plastics, 2019).

The most recent GlobeScan-SustainAbility study identifies Unilever as the No. 1 business sustainability leader for the eleventh consecutive year. Unilever raised from 14% to 62% of its agricultural raw materials that are obtained sustainably. Moreover, their manufacturing operations worldwide use 100% renewable grid power (Unilever,2020).

Unilever has been recognized as a global leader in corporate sustainability by the international environmental non-profit CDP, earning a spot on its "A-List" for combating climate change, preserving forests, and ensuring the security of water supplies (Unilever, 2020). Their initiatives take place at a time when businesses need to act as responsible global citizens (Matt Miller, 2022).

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