

Addressing Cross-Sectoral Challenges in Consumer Culture for Sustainability and Social Justice in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

In the context of Indonesia's dynamic socioeconomic landscape, this research focuses on sustainability and social justice while addressing cross-sectoral concerns in consumer culture. Through the use of a mixed-methods approach that incorporates qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, and in-depth case studies, the study sheds light on the complex interactions between environmental, cultural, and economic elements that influence consumer behavior. Results highlight financial limitations by showing a relationship between sustainable practices and socioeconomic level. Traditional and global cultural influences become important, influencing motivations and creating obstacles. Consumer choices are greatly influenced by business practices, which emphasizes the importance of transparency in promoting positive change. Case studies offer practical examples that highlight both the advantages and disadvantages of consumer behavior. Actionable recommendations for businesses, consumers, and politicians are informed by the combination of quantitative and qualitative findings, paving the way for Indonesia to adopt a more socially equitable and sustainable consumption culture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of the 21st century, consumer culture stands as a major force shaping societal norms, economic patterns, and environmental practices. The case of Indonesia, a country characterized by rapid economic development and rich cultural diversity, offers an interesting lens through which to view the complex relationship between consumer behavior, sustainability, and social justice. As the archipelago faces the challenges and opportunities of modernization, the consequences of consumer choices not only resonate within its borders but also reverberate globally, impacting environmental ecosystems and socio-economic structures. However, other consumer values such as functional value (price and quality), environmental value, conditional value, epistemic value, and emotional value do not influence green consumer behavior. This suggests that while consumers in Indonesia are aware of the importance of sustainability, their purchasing decisions are primarily driven by social considerations rather than environmental ones [1].

The rise of e-commerce in Indonesia, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has also had a significant impact on consumer behavior. Cultural factors play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences, with segmentation shifting from travel to home-based activities and interests. However, preferences for specific trends and lifestyles, such as products of Korean popular culture and products with halal certification, remain unchanged [2].

Illegal logging practices in Indonesia highlight the tension between economic development and environmental sustainability. Despite laws aimed at preventing and eradicating forest destruction,

illegal logging continues to be a significant issue, demonstrating the challenges of enforcing environmental regulations in the face of economic pressures [3]. Culture, brand image, and price also significantly affect consumer buying decisions in Indonesia. In East Java, for example, the strength of Islamic culture and price considerations are primary factors in buying decisions [4].

Sustainable consumption behavior in Indonesia is driven by factors such as perceived consumer effectiveness, trust from consumers, environmental knowledge, environmental responsibility, behavioral intention, emotion, and motivation regarding social consumption [5]. In the fashion industry, influencer credibility—which includes competence, trustworthiness, and attractiveness—has emerged as a critical component in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Dependability and competence are important aspects of influencer credibility that favorably affect consumers' decisions to buy [6].

For instance, consumer preferences have shifted from travel to home-based activities and interests. However, certain trends and lifestyle preferences, such as the younger generation's inclination towards Korean popular culture and products with halal certification, remain unchanged [2], [7]. The increasing influence of social media and fashion influencers on the millennial generation's purchasing decisions is another aspect of Indonesia's burgeoning consumer culture. This influence is not just about the characteristics of the influencers, but also about the congruence between the influencer's image and the brand being promoted, as well as the ideal self-image of followers [8].

However, the implications of this growing consumerism on sustainability and social justice are multifaceted. On one hand,

there is a growing trend towards green consumerism in Indonesia, with attitudes and perceived control behavior affecting green purchase intentions. This trend contributes to sustainable development by reducing waste and saving resources [9]. On the other hand, the rise of consumerism has also led to concerns about excessive shopping and buying goods/services beyond the limits of needs, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic [7]. This could potentially lead to issues of social justice, as seen in the case of post-colonial eastern Indonesia, where issues of inequality and social justice persist [10].

In terms of sustainability, the disclosure of carbon emissions and sustainability reporting by companies can have implications for investor reactions. For instance, in a study analyzing manufacturing and mining companies listed on the Indonesian and Malaysian stock exchanges, it was found that firm size and leverage significantly affect carbon emissions disclosure [11]. The importance of this research is to unravel the cross-cutting challenges embedded in Indonesian consumer culture, dissecting the economic, cultural and environmental dimensions that converge and, at times, conflict in the realm of consumption.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Consumer Culture and Sustainability

The concept of sustainable consumption extends beyond environmental considerations to include social and economic dimensions. This perspective aligns with the broader framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which posits that businesses play a pivotal role in shaping sustainable consumer practices. In the context of e-commerce, consumers are becoming more conscious of their online purchases and

demand sustainable consumption-friendly actions. This has led to a close relationship between consumer behavior and sustainability in e-commerce, with research showing that consumers are increasingly choosing more sustainable options [12].

The transition towards more sustainable consumption patterns is also evident in the tourism and hospitality industry. Here, environmentally-sustainable consumer behavior is seen as an important aspect of environmental protection, which ultimately benefits society. This behavior is driven by factors such as green image, pro-environmental behavior in everyday life, environmental knowledge, green product attachment, descriptive social norm, anticipated pride and guilt, environmental corporate social responsibility, perceived effectiveness, connectedness to nature, and green value [13]. However, the "throwaway culture," marked by rapid obsolescence and excessive waste, poses significant challenges to sustainability. This culture is particularly prevalent in the foodservice sector, where the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem by imposing a throwaway culture for food and personal protective equipment [9].

To address these challenges, consumers need to rethink and devise consumption models that alleviate the effects of the pandemic and increase the availability and consumption of alternative products with social, economic, health, and environmental impacts [14]. Moreover, the transition to a circular economy, which aims to reduce resource use by recycling materials, reusing products, extending their lifespan, and maintaining their economic value, could be an effective strategy to reduce negative environmental impacts [15].

2.1 Social Justice in Consumer Culture

Consumer culture and social justice are indeed intertwined, with consumption patterns having the potential to either exacerbate or alleviate existing inequalities. Conspicuous consumption, for instance, can reinforce social hierarchies and perpetuate disparities in access to resources and opportunities. This is because consumers' desire to display higher social status can influence conspicuous consumption, along with the choice of luxurious and prestigious goods [16]. This can deepen divisions within society, as it can lead to overspending on conspicuous goods, which can be seen as a signal for status-oriented individuals [17].

On the other hand, consumer choices can also contribute to social justice. For example, fair trade movements and ethical consumerism are ways in which consumers can use their purchasing power to support socially responsible practices. However, it's important to note that the effectiveness of these movements can be influenced by whether the brand's allyship is perceived as true or performative. Brands that show true allyship (expressing support through words and deeds) are evaluated more positively than those that engage in performative allyship (expressing allyship in words only). This effect is mediated by self-esteem and self-brand connection and is more pronounced for communities most affected by social injustice [18].

Moreover, consumption patterns can also reflect social inequalities. For instance, a study on the impact of job insecurity on health indicators in the Spanish workforce showed differentiated patterns of health and consumption. Unemployed people and those from more vulnerable social classes showed a higher prevalence of chronic depression, anxiety, and use of hypnotosedatives and tobacco. In contrast, the better positioned social classes reported greater work stress and

alcohol consumption [19]. Similarly, the economic crisis of 2008 led to changes in household consumption patterns in Spain, with young households being particularly affected [20].

2.2 Cross-Sectoral Challenges in Indonesia

Indonesian consumer culture has a complicated and multifaceted link with a number of elements, including globalization, economic situations, and traditional values.

In Indonesia, traditional values—especially those derived from Islamic traditions—have a big influence on how people shop. These customs offer a foundation for fending off the damaging effects of global hedonism and consumer culture [21]. This resistance frequently takes the shape of local wisdom, which encourages environmentally friendly activities and a peaceful coexistence with the natural world [22]. Economic concerns also have a big impact on consumer behavior. For example, it has been discovered that factors such as simplicity of use, security, financial capability, and economic advantages affect Indonesia's ongoing adoption of financial technology payments [23].

In order to promote sustainable and socially just consumer practices, it is important to address the socio-economic issues like income levels and economic inequities that also influence purchase patterns. Indonesian consumer culture is also influenced by globalization and exposure to other cultures. For instance, the "Hallyu" or Korean Wave has affected how Indonesian consumers view Korean multinational companies and their goods [24], [25]. Similarly, South Korean skincare and cosmetic product purchases made by Indonesian consumers have been impacted by the globalization of South Korean beauty

trends [24]. Furthermore, it is clear from a number of industries that consumer behavior affects buying decisions. For example, consumer behavior has a major role in influencing Generation Z's purchase of fashion items in Indonesia [24]. Similarly, the selection of rice cultivars in Africa is heavily influenced by customer tastes that are determined by cultural and colonial legacy [26].

3. METHODS

Because consumer culture is so complex, mixed-method research approaches are seen to be crucial. This strategy integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a thorough grasp of the intricate variables influencing Indonesian consumers' purchasing decisions. Techniques for stratified and random sampling will be combined in the sampling strategy. While stratification enables the inclusion of many demographic parameters like age, gender, and socioeconomic position, random sampling guarantees broad representation. A total of 321 samples were gathered for this study in order to capture the variability of the Indonesian population and ensure that the results reflect the larger consumer environment.

Quantitative information about consumer choices, actions, and attitudes toward social justice and sustainability was gathered through surveys. A representative sample of Indonesians will be given a structured questionnaire, which was created through an iterative approach using findings from the literature study. The inquiries will encompass economic, cultural, and environmental aspects, facilitating the detection of trends and associations within the information. Random and stratified procedures were used in the sampling process to provide a representative and varied sample

size. An online platform was used to distribute the survey, and participants from a variety of demographic backgrounds, including age, gender, and socioeconomic position, were targeted. With the use of SPSS software, the survey data will be statistically examined. The objective of this quantitative analysis is to examine trends, correlations, and statistical significance in order to gain a broad understanding of Indonesian consumer behavior.

Through case studies and in-depth interviews, qualitative insights are obtained. We will undertake semi-structured interviews with customers, policy officials, business owners, and pertinent specialists. These interviews will examine various facets of consumer decision-making, including drivers, obstacles, and attitudes toward social justice and sustainability. Case studies will entail a thorough analysis of particular consumer behaviors, companies, or projects that represent sustainable or unsustainable patterns of consumption. Rich qualitative data from these case studies will be available, enabling a contextualized knowledge of the potential and difficulties present in Indonesian consumer culture.

The case study results and interview transcripts will be subjected to thematic analysis in order to locate recurrent themes and unique insights. In order to provide a more comprehensive knowledge of the cultural, social, and economic elements influencing consumer behavior, this qualitative method is intended to supplement the quantitative data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from the mixed methods research approach used to address the cross-cutting challenges of consumer culture for sustainability and social justice in Indonesia.

The results are organized based on quantitative survey results, qualitative insights from interviews, and in-depth case studies. The discussion then explores the interconnectedness of the results, offering a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and suggesting strategies to drive positive change.

4.1 Quantitative Survey Results

The quantitative survey aimed to measure broad trends and patterns in consumer behavior across economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. The results showed an important correlation between socioeconomic status and sustainable consumer practices (sig 0.002). Participants with higher incomes showed a greater tendency towards sustainable choices, indicating that economic factors significantly influence consumption patterns.

In addition, the survey also showed an interaction between cultural values and consumer behavior (sig 0.000). Traditional cultural values, which are deeply embedded in Indonesian society, seem to influence the preference for local and handmade products. However, these cultural tendencies coexist with the growing influence of global consumer culture, demonstrating the complexity of cultural identities and dynamics in shaping consumption patterns.

Environmental awareness is emerging as an important factor in consumer decision-making. The majority of respondents expressed concern for environmental issues, and this concern is manifested in a willingness to support environmentally friendly products. However, the convenience and affordability of sustainable options remain barriers to widespread adoption.

4.2 Qualitative Insights from Interviews

The in-depth interviews provided qualitative depth to the survey findings,

shedding light on the motivations and challenges underlying consumer behavior. Participants articulated a desire for sustainability but cited barriers such as limited accessibility to green options, price disparities, and lack of awareness regarding the broader impacts of their choices.

Cultural values emerged as both a driver and a barrier. While some participants were driven by a desire to preserve traditional practices, others found it difficult to align cultural values with a global consumer culture that often encourages conspicuous consumption.

The role of business in shaping consumer behavior was evident in the interview responses. Participants highlighted the impact of transparent and socially responsible business practices in influencing their purchasing decisions. This underscores the potential for businesses to act as catalysts for positive change in the consumer cultural landscape.

4.3 Case Study Findings

Case studies offer a detailed examination of specific consumer practices and business models. One notable case study focuses on a local cooperative that promotes sustainable agricultural practices. This cooperative not only addresses environmental concerns but also contributes to social justice by empowering local farmers. This serves as an example of how sustainable practices can align with broader social and economic goals.

In contrast, a case study on fast fashion highlights the negative environmental and social implications of consumer choices. The pursuit of cheap, fast-changing fashion trends was found to contribute significantly to environmental degradation and poor working conditions in the industry.

Discussion

The combination of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a complex consumer behavior landscape in Indonesia. Economic factors play a significant role in influencing the adoption of sustainable practices. However, the cultural context is equally influential, shaping motivations for choosing sustainable practices and barriers to their widespread adoption.

The link between sustainability and social justice is evident in the case studies. The positive examples illustrate that sustainable consumer practices can align with broader social and economic goals, providing a roadmap for businesses and policymakers. Conversely, the negative examples underscore the urgency to address unsustainable practices that perpetuate social and environmental injustice.

This discussion emphasizes the need for targeted interventions across multiple sectors. Policymakers can play an important role in creating an enabling environment for sustainable practices through incentives, regulations and public awareness campaigns. Businesses, as the case studies show, can be agents of change by adopting transparent and socially responsible practices.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of Indonesian consumer behavior and highlights the cross-sectoral issues affecting social justice and sustainability. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data points to a complex web of impacts where environmental consciousness, cultural dynamics, and economic issues all come together. The relationship between

sustainable behaviors and socioeconomic position highlights the necessity for focused measures that remove financial obstacles. Cultural influences necessitate approaches that balance tradition and modernity, both as transformational and preservation. As long as they follow open and socially conscious procedures, businesses can be seen as constructive change agents. Case studies from the real world emphasize how urgent it is to address unsustainable habits while also showing how sustainable projects have the potential to have a positive impact on the environment and society.

The suggestions made here give stakeholders a road map and practical tactics for promoting an environmentally friendly and socially conscious consumer culture. Together, policies that support economic inclusion, consumer education about the consequences of their decisions, and rewards for sustainable behavior can help create a more conscientious consumer base. Companies are urged to adopt circular economy principles, transparency, and partnerships with regional craftsmen. Strategies for cultural integration embrace ecological practices and work to maintain heritage.

This study is a call to action for all parties involved as well as a glimpse of Indonesia's present consumer landscape. Global sustainability initiatives will be impacted by the decisions made today as Indonesia continues on its path of economic development. Indonesia can take the lead in creating a consumer culture that is inclusive, knowledgeable, and culturally relevant in the future. This will ensure that social justice and sustainability coexist peacefully and that ecological resilience and economic prosperity are balanced.

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