

A Brand Research in The Framework of Sustainable Production and Consumption in The Retail Industry

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ABSTRACT

The change in consumption behaviors over time has led to excessive consumption, increased resource consumption and waste. Since this situation threatens the ecological system, nature and living things, Environmental protection organizations and non-governmental organizations also raise awareness about ecological hazards and encourage businesses/brands and consumers to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. Brands that adopt sustainable production and consumption operate by protecting the ecological system and aim to gain trust by inviting their consumers to sustainability with various marketing strategies.

In this direction, the purpose of this research is to examine the IKEA brand operating in the retail sector as a case study within the framework of nine elements of sustainable production and consumption. Therefore, the dataset of the research is the activities and practices of the IKEA brand, including its mission, vision, values, business management, production process and principles, marketing strategies. In the research, document analysis was used to obtain data, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods, and content analysis was used to analyze the obtained data, which is one of the qualitative analysis methods. As a conclusion of the research, it has been finalized that the IKEA brand sets an example for sustainable production and consumption with its principles and activities.

Keywords: Sustainability, Sustainable Production and Consumption, Retail Sector.

JEL Classifications: L1, L81, M1, M3, Q01, Q5

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1. Introduction

While the developments in the production systems have increased the product variety and consumption, they have also led the consumers to an insatiable profile in their consumption behaviors in the direction of surplus, hedonic, uncontrolled and excessive consumption. By increasing the waste in consumption, it has begun to harm nature, living things and the ecological system, hence future generations. In order to draw attention to this situation, authorities with social roles, environmental organizations, non-governmental organizations have created awareness, organized various campaigns, and sustainability in production and consumption has come to the fore with the awareness of businesses/brands and consumers.

Sustainability is discussed with two different approaches, both the present and future welfare of individuals and the protection of the ecological system. Sustainability is defined as expanding the material freedoms and opportunities of the current generation without harming the habitats of next generations (Klugman, 2011). Sustainability with an ecological approach has been expressed by ecologists and biologists as the rate at which renewable resources can be purified from environmental pollution without threatening the integrity, order and existence of ecosystems (Vos, 2007).

Sustainable production is described as the creation of services and goods by using processes and systems without polluting the environment. In sustainable production; natural environment, social justice and society development, economic performance, employees and manufactured products, energy and material use (resources) are considered as a whole (Veleva and Ellenbecker, 2001). Sustainable consumption, as expressed in the Oslo Symposium held in 1994, is defined as the provision of a better quality of life and meeting basic needs by minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic substances, waste emissions and all substances polluting the environment, in order not to endanger the needs of future generations (Sharma and Jha, 2017). Some businesses/brands, with their awareness, make changes in their production systems in order to ensure sustainability and invite their consumers to adopt a sustainable lifestyle using various marketing strategies.

In line with these explanations, in this study, first of all, the concept of sustainability, sustainable production and consumption, concepts related to sustainability are included in the literature review, and the historical development of the IKEA brand is briefly mentioned. In the research part of the study, all activities of the IKEA brand, including its mission, marketing strategies and production principles, are examined within the framework of nine elements of sustainable production and consumption announced by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) (2015).

2. Conceptual Framework

The concept of sustainability, sustainable production and consumption, the elements of sustainable production and consumption, and the historical development process of the IKEA brand, which are the subjects of the research, are explained under this title.

2.1. The Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability was defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for the first time in 1982 as resource management, which means that people can benefit from natural resources without risking the lives of other living things in nature. It was also described by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as meeting the needs of the current generation without ignoring the requirements of the next generations (Özbakır and Velioğlu, 2010). As can be understood from these two definitions, the concept of sustainability can be defined in two different aspects according to the interpreters: In the first definition, sustainability is considered as a relationship between the current and next prosperity of individuals. In the second definition, in sustainability, which is considered as an ecological approach, the protection of the living systems in nature is handled as the primary target (Norton, 1992).

When the origin of the concept of sustainability is examined, it is seen that the origin of the word is based on the Latin "subtenir" used in the meaning of "protect" or "support from below", and dates back to the industrial revolution as a period (Tuna, 2014).

Many of the definitions for the explanation of sustainability emphasize the point that the purpose of sustainability is the survival of human

beings. In this context, it turns out that the desirability of a sustainable biosphere without Homo Sapiens (the knowing human) is also unacceptable (Brown et al., 1987). In short, sustainability is about anthropic (human) society (Boutilier, 2009). Human society has an obligation to produce and use natural resources in order to continue its vital activities. When considered within this framework, it can be formulated as “Sustainability = Production + Protection”. In other words, in sustainability, on one hand the basic (natural) resources on which production is based are protected for future generations, on the other hand, the production needs of the users are met with the existing basic resources (Young, 1998).

2.2. Concepts of Sustainable Production and Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable production is described as the creation of services and goods by using processes and systems without polluting the environment. In sustainable production; natural environment, social justice and society development, economic performance, employees and manufactured products, energy and material use (resources) are considered as a whole (Veleva and Ellenbecker, 2001).

Sustainable production is the case when the manufacturing industry not only meets the society's need to create wealth (richness), but also performs this function in a way that supports sustainable economic development (O'Brien, 1999). Sustainable production is action that does not pose a threat to future generations and action that is not taken (renounced) for future generations (with them in mind) (Krolczyk vd., 2019). Sustainable production can be expressed as the realization of the manufacturing process in line with the objectives of preventing waste and pollution at their source, reducing operational costs, minimizing the use of hazardous raw materials, reducing risks to human health, improving effective management practices, improving water and energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable development (Alkaya, 2013).

Sustainable consumption, as expressed in the Oslo Symposium held in 1994, is defined as the provision of a better quality of life and meeting basic needs by minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic substances, waste emissions and all substances polluting the environment, in order not to endanger the needs of future generations (Sharma and Jha, 2017).

There is no common, clear definition of what sustainable consumption is (Jackson, 2007) but there are various definitions and explanations expressed by different authors. The use of products that minimize the use of natural resources and toxic substances as well as waste and damage throughout the life cycle, and the products that offer a better life in order to meet the basic needs so as not to endanger the needs of future generations, is also expressed as “sustainable consumption” (Black ve Cherrier, 2010).

Sustainable consumption is socio-economic as well as ecological and includes not only the acquisition and consumption of products, but also their use and disposal. On the other hand, ensuring sustainability in different consumption areas such as food, shelter and clothing is a part of sustainable consumption (Geiger et al., 2018). The goal of sustainable consumption is to live within environmental limits and to provide a strong, healthy and fair society (Sustainable Consumption Round Table, 2006).

2.3. Elements of Sustainable Production and Consumption

It was announced by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in 2015 that there were nine basic elements of sustainable production and consumption. In this direction, the elements of sustainable production and consumption are "waste management", “sustainable resource management”, "design for sustainability", "cleaner production and resource efficiency", "sustainable transportation", "eco-labeling and certification", "sustainable procurement”, “sustainable marketing” and “sustainable lifestyle”.

•**Waste Management:** It refers to the collection, transportation, processing, recycling or destruction of waste materials and the monitoring of all these processes (Demirbas, 2011).

•**Sustainable Resource Management:** It can be expressed as maximizing human welfare without hindering the rational use of natural resources and supporting the living ecosystem for the purposes of ensuring resource and energy optimization, promoting better infrastructure and access to basic resources (Xia et al., 2020).

•**Design for Sustainability/D4S:** It is the consideration of environmental aspects and relationships of the product during all lifecycle stages, even as early as possible, during the development and design stages (Rocha et al., 2019).

•**Cleaner Production and Resource Efficiency:** Cleaner production is a preventive strategy to reduce the negative effect of production and products on the environment (Fresner, 1998). Resource efficiency, on the other hand, is expressed as a way to avoid resource scarcity and obtain resources (such as climate targets) and an opportunity to achieve economic competitiveness (Bundgaard et al., 2017).

•**Sustainable Transportation:** It is described as meeting the present transportation and mobility requirements without compromising the capability of next generations to meet their requirements (Black, 2004).

•**Eco-Labeling and Certification:** Certification is a typical mechanism by which a third party trusted by the manufacturer and consumer establishes trust “as objective evidence to demonstrate the capabilities and prospects of a trading partner” (Lee et al., 2020). Eco-labeling, on the other hand, is expressed as an information tool that aims to internalize the external effects of the production, consumption and subsequent disposal of products on the environment (Taufique et al., 2019).

•**Sustainable Procurement:** Sustainable supply is defined as the process of meeting the needs of an organization with the most helpful financial value while reducing the various impacts of relevant organization's activities on society and the environment (Aktin and Gergin, 2016).

•**Sustainable Marketing:** It is a vision that focuses on the productive use of resources, aiming at providing the best value to consumers and other stakeholders, considering the long-term interests of society and the environment (Cătoiu et al., 2010).

•**Sustainable Lifestyle:** It is defined as a distinctive way of life belonging to an individual in which the basic quality of life that can be sustained indefinitely by a given population within the carrying capacity of any ecoregion is guaranteed (Devuyst and Volsem, 2001).

2.4. IKEA Brand

The history of the IKEA brand, which serves in the retail sector, is based on the fact that Swedish Ingvar Kamprad, born in 1926, started selling matchboxes to his neighbors at the Elmtaryd farm in Agunnaryd village, where he lived when he was five years old. Having made a good profit by buying matchboxes cheaply in bulk from Stockholm, the capital of Sweden and selling them individually, Kamprad expands his own business by selling pens, flower seeds, Christmas tree decorations and greeting cards. When he was 17, his father gave Kamprad some money (capital) for being successful in his enterprises, and Kamprad used this money to start his own business, which consists of the initials of his name and surname (I. K.) and the initials of the farm and village where he grew up (E. A.).

In the following years, Kamprad expanded his business and started his furniture venture, reaching many people with a catalog and showroom. He outsourced the production of furniture to local manufacturers near his home. The catalog he used enabled the furniture to be sold on a larger scale and thus the well-known IKEA catalog emerged. IKEA's unassembled furniture shipment started when one of the employees removed the legs of the product for the first time to move the table named LÖVET easily and without damage. The flat box and disassembly idea, which started with a table, provided a great advantage in transportation, since shipping the product as a whole is both costly and difficult.

IKEA's first store was opened in Sweden with a 6,700 square meter homeware store in the city of Älmhult, and this store became Scandinavia's first large furniture display area. Its first store outside Sweden was opened in Oslo. IKEA's first stores were opened in France in 1981, Belgium in 1984, the United States in 1985, the United Kingdom in 1987, and Italy in 1989 (www.ikea.com, 2020). According to the "Global 500" report of 2023, which includes the world's 500 most valuable brands, announced annually by Brand Finance, a brand valuation company, the IKEA brand ranks 125th in the list with a brand value of 15.9 billion dollars (www.brandirectory.com, 2023; www.static.brandirectory.com, 2023).

3. Research Methodology

The purpose, importance and method of the research are given under this title.

3.1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

The fact that consumption behavior goes beyond meeting needs and turns into excess has led some consumers to be sensitive to nature and living things, to adopt a simple lifestyle, and to reduce non-essential consumption. In this way, the satisfaction and meaning of life are increased, contributing to sustainability (Herziger et al., 2017; Kraisornsuthasinee and Swierczek, 2018). This change in consumption has been included in the strategies of businesses/brands and some brands have started to use issues such as sustainability, voluntary simplicity and minimalism in their marketing strategies. Businesses/brands that encourage their consumers and employees for sustainability and simplicity can provide advantages such as gaining the trust of consumers and creating a sense of freedom in their minds (Chowhudry, 2018).

Minimizing the use of natural resources, recycling or disposal of wastes are explained as elements that define sustainable production and consumption (Norton, 1992; Sharma and Jha, 2017). IKEA, on the other hand, as a brand that has an important position in the retail sector with its brand value, emphasizes the importance it attaches to nature, the ecological system and future generations with implementations it realizes both in production systems and in marketing activities. It reveals how it provides sustainability under its own roof on its web page, social media accounts, and advertisements. In this direction, the aim of this research is to contribute to the marketing literature and make suggestions to brands operating in this field, as a result of examining all activities of the IKEA brand, including marketing strategies and production principles, within the framework of sustainability (sustainable production and consumption).

In the foreign marketing literature, there are studies in which the IKEA brand is discussed within the framework of sustainability (Sklyarova and Kobets, 2011; Hrelja et al., 2012; Ojo et al., 2015; Alänge et al., 2016) and minimalism (Tarnovskaya, 2011; Rose, 2015). In the foreign literature, there is a study in which the IKEA brand is given as an

example for voluntary simplicity (Suddaby, 2019). The fact that the IKEA brand has not been discussed within the framework of sustainable production and consumption and has not been evaluated in detail constitutes the importance of this study and its difference from other studies. In this study, the sustainable style, ecological sensitivity of the IKEA brand; it is evaluated by associating with the literature review and the elements of sustainable production and consumption. This study evaluates the IKEA brand with all its activities and examples in detail on topics which are "waste management, sustainable resource management, design for sustainability, cleaner production and resource efficiency, sustainable transport, eco-labelling and certification, sustainable procurement, sustainable marketing and sustainable lifestyle". Therefore, it is a unique study as there is no such study and achieves its goal of contributing to science and the retail sector.

3.2. Method and Assumptions of the Research

The IKEA brand, operating in the retail sector (www.static.brandirectory.com, 2023), is discussed in this study using the case study method, which is one of the qualitative research methods within the framework of sustainability, which is related to concepts such as minimalism, simplicity, environmental awareness. All activities of the IKEA brand, which is considered as a case study (research method), including its mission, vision, values, management as a business, production process and marketing strategies constitute the dataset of this research, and the document review method used to obtain the dataset (including internet data) constitutes the data collection method of the research. Content analysis method, one of the qualitative analysis techniques used to evaluate the information obtained, also constitutes the data analysis method of this research. The case study method is a qualitative research method that allows the researcher to collect data from various sources and combine the data for explanation, based on systematic research on one or more institutions, organizations, communities, groups, on the axis of a certain time period (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Altunışık et al., 2012; Şahin, 2020). Document analysis method is the inclusion and examination of written or visual materials such as official or personal sources, archive data, photographs, videos, reports, newspapers, magazines, autobiographies, documentaries obtained from the research area (Güler et al., 2015; Baş and Akturan, 2017). Content analysis, on the other hand, is a qualitative analysis

technique that aims to provide information and understanding about the phenomenon under examination, allowing to reveal the implicit content that cannot be easily seen, understood and expressed about a document, situation, location or event (Hsieh ve Shannon, 2005; Bilgin, 2014; Karakullukcu, 2020). The obtained information is evaluated with content analysis, which is a qualitative analysis method, by associating it with nine elements that explain the elements of sustainable production and consumption (UNEP, 2015) as a whole. For all images and texts containing the name and logo of the IKEA brand which are used in the study, the brand's permission was obtained by contacting the brand itself. Therefore, the study has been prepared on an ethically sound basis.

After the ecological damage caused by excessive consumption and the extinction of some living species, it has become important to increase the respect for nature, living things, ecological system and future generations in line with the awareness of many environmental organizations, businesses and consumers, and to increase waste management and recyclability. Therefore, sustainable production and consumption has become a way of life. It is assumed that addressing sustainable production and consumption in the context of the IKEA brand case study will contribute to other businesses (brands) and marketing literature.

4. Content Analysis and Findings of the IKEA Case Study

The IKEA brand, which operates in the retail sector, is discussed under this heading as a case study. All activities and practices of the IKEA brand, including its mission, vision, values, management as a business, production process and marketing strategies, are examined separately for the nine elements of sustainable production and consumption announced by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) (2015).

4.1. Waste Management

IKEA brand makes various applications for waste management. It has activities such as products from recyclable materials, recycling directions, new goals and practices for a more sustainable life.

Figure 1. Waste Management Examples



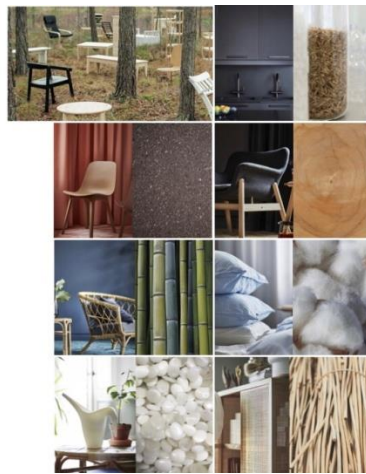
Source: <https://www.onahazymorning.com/ikea-a-better-world-starts-at-home-global-campaign-photography>, 2020. <https://inkbotdesign.com/brand-image-loyalty/>, 2020. <https://www.ikea.com/sg/en/campaigns/zero-waste-pub66204691>, 2020.

In the photographs in Figure 1, on the four posters on the left, there are sustainable practices that it makes and targets with the slogan "a better world starts at home". With banners with the words "Committed to use only renewable or recycled materials by 2030", "Committed to using 100% responsibly sourced (environmentally friendly) or recycled wood by 2020", "By 2020 we say goodbye to all single-use plastic", it has announced to its consumers its targets and actions for sustainable, waste-free production and consumption. With the statement "100% of our cotton is sourced responsibly" written on a pillow, it stated that it procured the cotton from places where child farmers are not employed. Shared with the slogan "Choose to reuse", the banner featuring the "blue IKEA frakta bag" encourages consumers to prefer reusable bags instead of disposable, non-durable bags. IKEA makes many advertisements regarding the usage areas of IKEA frakta bags, which have become iconic since the day they were put into use, and draws attention to sustainability. With the phrases "Recycling is easier now, we will get it from here", written strikingly around the waste bins it puts in certain places in the stores, it states that it recycles their waste and invites its consumers to recycle. Therefore, it can be said that the IKEA brand fulfills the waste management element of sustainable production and consumption.

4.2. Sustainable Resource Management

Sustainability of the raw materials, ie the resources, that enable the manufacturing of the products, forms the basis of the sustainability of the product. The IKEA brand uses natural and sustainable materials as the raw material of its products.

Figure 2. Sustainable Resources



Source: https://www.ikea.com/ms/en_JP/this-is-ikea/choosing_materials/index.html, 2020.

The IKEA brand stated on its website that it aims to use recycled or recyclable resources when it cannot use renewable resources (where it is not possible/appropriate to use), and it takes this into account not only in materials but also in all matters related to people, production and transportation. It procures wood, one of its raw materials, in accordance with sustainability, taking care of nature protection and in accordance with the law, within the framework of the IWAY Standard, which prohibits illegal procurement related to forests. It uses FSC Certified or recycled resources that do not destroy the ecosystem and people's livelihoods. In cotton raw materials, since 2015, it has been supplying cotton that is “more sustainable”, that is, which minimizes the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and therefore is better for people and the environment. Since cotton is a natural and renewable material that can breathe well, it prefers cotton. IKEA prefers natural fiber materials such as banana fibers, cork, rattan and water hyacinth for the production of its products. Some of the production is carried out with these all-natural

and renewable materials through weavers and artisans in Vietnam, Indonesia and China. Wool raw material is also preferred because it is sustainable, and its supply is provided within the framework of RWS (Responsible Wool Standard), which envisages treating sheep with respect. In addition, it takes care to use recycled materials regardless of wood, plastic, paper, metal and waste materials from another production as much as possible. It uses a material consisting of two or more raw materials with different properties, called composite. For example, in wood-plastic composite products, plastic makes the product stronger, while fiber makes it cheaper and lighter. It uses recycled and/or renewable plastic in its plastic products. It widely uses plastics such as PET, PE and PP that comply with the strictest legal and safety standards. Disposable plastic products (cups, plastic straws, plates, etc.) had been gradually removed from the product range since 2020. For recycled plastic bottles, it plans to use BioPET, which is a polyester resin derived from sugarcane, as a raw material, with the intention of ensuring that it is recycled again. Another source of raw materials is bamboo, which is the fastest growing, hard and moisture resistant plant.

The fact that it makes production with natural and recyclable raw materials as well as recycled or waste materials shows that IKEA realizes the sustainable resource management element.

4.3. Design for Sustainability/D4S

While creating a sustainable product, it is important that the design of the product is also sustainable. The IKEA brand offers its sustainable products to its consumers with sustainable design.

Figure 3. Sustainable Designs



Source: https://www.ikea.com/ms/en_JP/about_ikea/pdf/Environmental_Design.pdf, 2020.

IKEA, which manufactures its products from recycled materials, also designs them in a sustainable way. It shares with its consumers from which product the productions are made by recycling, as in Figure 3. The product named LÅDIS is produced from waste plastic used in the transportation of products. The product named LAMPAN has been designed in such a way that it has the optimal packaging with all parts inside the lampshade. The product, named IKEA PS ELLAN, was designed by producing recyclable polypropylene and wood fibers from sawmill waste. The product named IKEA PS JORDBRO is designed as a flower pot made from recycled milk packages.

Manufacturing its products from recycled materials with useful and sustainable designs shows that IKEA also fulfills the element of design for sustainability.

4.4. Cleaner Production and Resource Efficiency

The works carried out by the IKEA brand to reduce waste, the recycling projects it carries out, the production with raw materials that do not harm the environment, that is, the source, show that it also fulfills the elements of cleaner production and resource efficiency. The IKEA brand's statement that it will not include single-use plastic products in its store for certain dates, that it will produce with completely natural, renewable, environmentally friendly and recyclable resources, and that it

sets sustainable goals for itself and shares these with its consumers, can be seen as proof that it will continue its activities for cleaner production and resource efficiency.

4.5. Sustainable Transportation

The element of sustainable transportation includes the transportation operations in all processes from the procurement of the raw materials of the products to the delivery to the consumers in an environmentally friendly, that is, sustainable manner.

Figure 4. Sustainable Transportation



Source: <https://about.ikea.com/en/sustainability/becoming-climate-positive/zero-emissions-for-home-deliveries>, 2020. <https://smartercommunities.media/ikeas-push-to-sustainable-transport/>, 2020.

In order to achieve to reduce the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions that it targets by 2030 within the framework of being sensitive to climate, it has started to deliver some of its deliveries to homes with electric vehicles in China, Australia, France and India and targets to achieve this in more countries. The increase in electronic shopping causes an increase in the number of vehicles/trucks that carry out the distribution of cargo, and these vehicles cause traffic congestion and air pollution. For this reason, IKEA has converted the vehicles it uses for cargo deliveries in the city center to electric vehicles and has placed electric vehicle charging points in more than 75% of its stores. With these charging points, it encourages its consumers to use electric vehicles. The efforts to realize the supply and transportation using renewable electricity for the 100% zero emission target can be shown as proof that IKEA has realized the sustainable transportation element.

4.6. Eco-Labeling and Certification

The eco-labeling and certification element refers to proving that products are sensitive to nature based on various certificates. Having certificates in accordance with certain standards indicates that the relevant product is produced in accordance with the specified standards and that all the conditions of those standards are fulfilled.

It sources all its wood in accordance with the IWAY Forestry Standard, which prohibits illegal forest-related use. It has committed to source 100% of all its wood from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Certified or recycled sources by 2020. The FSC Standard protects both the ecosystem and people's livelihoods. The wool is procured from places where sheep are treated with respect within the framework of RWS (Responsible Wool Standard) (www.ecowarriorprincess.net, 2020; www.theguardian.com, 2020).

4.7. Sustainable Procurement

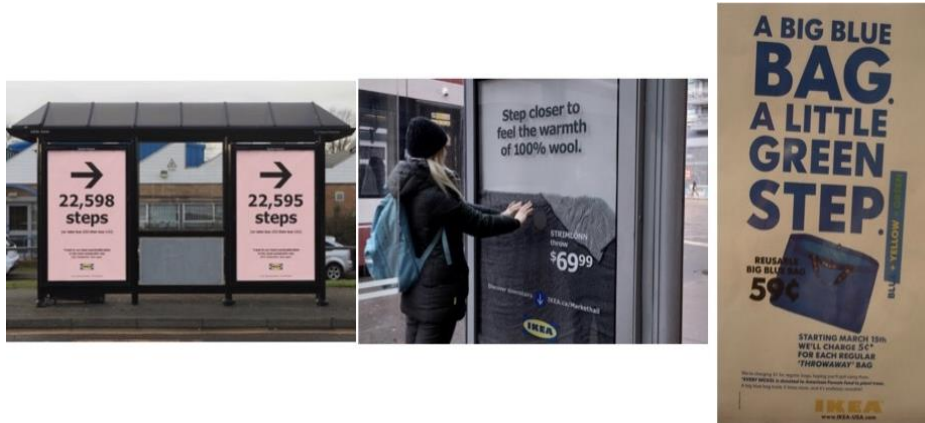
Sustainable procurement means that all stages including the source, production, packaging and transportation of the product are carried out in accordance with nature, living things and ecological system, that is, sustainable.

The IKEA brand chooses natural, renewable and recyclable materials for its products as raw materials, that is sources, and even creates new products with sustainable designs by recycling waste. It takes into account the ecological system in all stages until the delivery of its products to the consumer, and carries out its activities in accordance with the standards based on nature protection.

4.8. Sustainable Marketing

It means that the marketing strategies used by the brand to communicate with consumers are carried out within the framework of sustainability, and consumers are encouraged to sustainability.

Figure 5. Sustainable Marketing Examples



Source: <https://motherlondon.com/work/ikea-steps/>, 2020. <https://strategyonline.ca/2017/02/15/ikea-keeps-market-hall-campaign-sustainable/>, 2020. <https://beautythatmoves.typepad.com/photos/uncategorized/2007/03/24/dsc02998.jpg>, 2020.

Continuing its sustainable production activities with new targets, IKEA encourages consumers to walk (or use public transportation) with the billboard advertisements it uses to reduce their carbon footprint. For this, it can be shown as a successful Guerrilla Marketing and Sustainable Marketing strategy that it describes the transportation to the Greenwich store, specifying the number of steps and the most sustainable trip (or specifying the bus number).

It has emphasized sustainability by placing a picture of a product made of “wool”, a natural material, on a billboard whose warmth is felt as a person approaches it.

When IKEA presented its iconic blue frock bag to the consumers for the first time, it shared the with slogan “One big blue bag. One small green step” through the billboard and emphasized the importance of the non-disposable, sustainable bag for nature.

4.9. Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable lifestyle means that sustainability goes beyond a goal, purpose, project, production or consumption, and turns into a lifestyle, perspective on life, and philosophy of life.

Figure 6. Examples of Sustainable Life Style



Source: <https://twitter.com/MikeHudema/status/125709070827780481>, 2020.
<https://twitter.com/IKEAStLouis/status/855519587537956865>, 2020.

IKEA has installed 1 million solar electric panels in its stores, built 535 wind turbines and built 2 solar parks. Thus, by using renewable energy, it has taken a big step to prevent the damage to nature and global warming by starting the climate sensitivity that it aims to fulfill by 2030.

In a tweet it shared for the “Earth Day” in 2017, it invited its consumers to buy renewable energy light bulbs and products of natural origin, which they produced for a more sustainable life at IKEA stores.

The IKEA brand undertakes and carries out its activities not only for the purpose of implementing sustainable production and consumption today, but also for the future in a way that will have effect in very long term. Therefore, it can be said that it has made sustainability a way of life.

5. Conclusion

Consumption addiction, which is increasing day by day, increases the amount of waste released to nature and the amount of toxic released, apart from driving individuals to shopping. This increase disrupts the balance of nature and the ecological system, endangers the lives of plants and animals and even the lives of future generations. There are

some organizations, institutions and non-governmental organizations working to protect nature and living things and to create social awareness. Governments with their policies, businesses with their production, marketing activities and consumers with their consumption behaviors, show sensitivity to nature, living things and the ecological system and encourage others to be sensitive.

Sustainability is a concept based on two different approaches, a relationship between the current and next well-being of individuals and the preservation of the living systems in nature (Norton, 1992). Sustainable production is described as the creation of services and goods by using processes and systems without polluting the environment. In sustainable production; natural environment, social justice and society development, economic performance, employees and manufactured products, energy and material use (resources) are considered as a whole (Veleva and Ellenbecker, 2001). Sustainable consumption, as expressed in the Oslo Symposium held in 1994, is defined as the provision of a better quality of life and meeting basic needs by reducing the use of natural resources, toxic substances, waste emissions and all substances polluting the environment, in order not to endanger the requirements of next generations (Sharma and Jha, 2017).

The IKEA brand sets an example for sustainability, that is, for sustainable production and consumption, with all its activities, including its goals, mission, production and marketing strategies. In this research, as a case study, the IKEA brand is discussed with the content analysis method within the framework of the nine elements of sustainable production and consumption, which were announced by the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) (2015) in terms of its applications.

When examined in terms of the “waste management” element of sustainable production and consumption, it is seen that the IKEA brand does not keep single-use plastics in its stores, encourages its consumers to use sustainable bags, supplies materials that are recyclable in nature and obtained responsibly towards people, and directs them to recyclable waste bins for recycling of consumer waste.

When the IKEA brand is examined within the framework of the element of "sustainable resource management", it makes production with natural

and recyclable raw materials such as cotton, wood, composite, bamboo, fibers, as well as recycled plastic or waste materials.

When evaluated within the scope of “design for sustainability”, the IKEA brand recycles many waste materials such as baby diapers, milk packages, sawmill waste, and creates products with useful, sustainable designs.

When the IKEA brand is considered within the scope of "cleaner production and resource efficiency", it is seen that it uses natural, environmentally friendly resources as the raw material of the products or recycles wastes. The fact that it sets targets for a more sustainable life for certain dates shows that it will continue to operate within the framework of cleaner production and resource efficiency.

The IKEA brand, which started to carry out its cargo deliveries in the city center with renewable electric vehicles with the goal of zero emissions, has also installed electric charging stations in 75% of its stores. By preventing air pollution, it reflects its sensitivity to climate changes in its activities and provides "sustainable transportation".

As a result of supplying its products in accordance with the IWAY Forestry Standard, committing to obtain it from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) Certified or recycled sources by 2020, and procuring its wool from places where sheep are treated with respect within the framework of RWS (Responsible Wool Standard), it can be said that the IKEA brand realizes the element of “eco-labelling and certification”.

It can be said that IKEA also fulfills the element of "sustainable procurement" in line with the fact that all stages of the product, including its source, creation, packaging and transportation, are carried out in accordance with nature, living things and the ecological system.

Sharing its activities within the framework of sustainability with its consumers through various marketing strategies, IKEA invites its consumers to reduce their carbon footprints. For this, it directed its consumers to use walking (or public transportation) by placing billboard advertisements indicating how many steps they can take to reach the Greenwich store. It realizes the element of "sustainable marketing" by

placing advertisements stating that its products are produced from natural and renewable raw materials. The study by Rodrigo (2023) confirms that IKEA's sustainability success is based on reaching the consumer with the right advertisement and message through raw material sourcing, waste management, internal human resources policy and sustainable marketing.

Emphasizing at every opportunity that it will continue to carry out its sustainable activities not only for today but also for the coming years, IKEA proves that it transforms “sustainability” into a “lifestyle” both with the renewable products it produces and with 1 million solar electric panels, 535 wind turbines and 2 solar parks it has placed in its stores.

The IKEA brand effectively realizes sustainable production and consumption, both with its production and practices, and with the targets it sets for itself. It carries out almost all of its activities in the retail sector within the framework of sustainability and invites its consumers to sustainability, thus, it tries to prevent climate change by protecting nature, living things and the ecological system, and serves to fulfill its social responsibilities. The fact that the IKEA brand successfully implements sustainable development and provides competitive advantage has also been demonstrated by Chusnia et al. (2022), which supports the result of this study. With its sustainability success, the IKEA brand sets an appropriate example for other brands also with these three dimensions in terms of environmental, social and economic aspects (Li et al., 2022).

The importance of sustainability has come to the fore again with the Covid-19 pandemic process. Studies have revealed that, in this process, with the protection of social distance and the restriction of travel between countries, there are pauses in energy and carbon-intensive economic sectors and decreases in emissions. Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic process has turned out to allow for a temporary reduction in environmental degradation (Sarkodie and Owusu, 2020). On the other hand, disruptions in the trade network between countries caused disruptions in the supply chain of enterprises and product shortages. For businesses that need to make their supply and production systems more flexible, it has become necessary to develop sustainable production and consumption (Kumar et al., 2020). In this process, which reveals the importance of enterprises to systemize sustainability both for themselves

and the ecosystem they live in, the concepts of sustainable production and consumption remain up-to-date. Examining the policies and strategies implemented by the IKEA brand, which realizes the elements of sustainable production and consumption, in the Covid-19 pandemic process, where sustainability is emphasized, is important in terms of both contributing to the marketing literature and setting an example for other businesses/brands.

Although there are studies that discuss brands within the framework of sustainability in the marketing literature, studies that discuss brands with content analysis in the context of sustainability elements do not show much diversity. For this reason, studies to be conducted by researching different brands will contribute to the marketing literature. The fact that the IKEA brand is among the most valuable brands in the world with all its sustainable activities can set an example that other brands in the retail sector can also gain the preference of their consumers by carrying out their activities within the framework of sustainability.

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