

The Role of Marketing for Product Innovation on Buyer Decisions Uis Karo

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Abstract— This study aims to examine the role of marketing in the purchasing decisions of Uis Karo fabric. Uis Karo fabric, which is a product of Indonesian culture, possesses high aesthetic and symbolic value, making effective marketing crucial for attracting consumer attention. The research method employed is a qualitative approach, with data collection conducted through interviews and observations of business actors and consumers. The results indicate that marketing strategies, which include increasing brand awareness, using appealing visual elements, and identifying the right target market, significantly contribute to purchasing decisions. Additionally, communication of the product's value and advantages, interaction with consumers through social media, and positive promotions and reviews from consumers also play an important role. This study concludes that effective marketing, along with product innovation, not only enhances product visibility but also builds a strong relationship between the brand and consumers, thereby increasing the chances of success in the Uis Karo fabric market.

Keywords—Marketing, Product Innovation, Buyer Decisions, Uis Karo

I. INTRODUCTION

Uis Karo is a traditional fabric characteristic of the Karo tribe, one of the ethnic groups in North Sumatra, Indonesia, which holds deep cultural value and philosophy. This fabric serves not only as clothing or accessories but also plays an important role in various traditional ceremonies and symbolizes the cultural identity of the Karo people. Over time, Uis Karo has faced significant challenges, particularly in maintaining its existence amid competition with more practical and economical modern textile products. Therefore, product innovation and effective marketing strategies are essential steps to enhance the appeal and sales of Uis Karo fabric.

Product innovation is a key factor in maintaining the relevance of this traditional product in the modern market. Through innovation, Uis Karo can be presented in forms and styles that are more aligned with contemporary tastes, whether through modifications in color, design, or product variations. This innovation aims to attract younger

consumers and open new markets without diminishing the existing cultural values. However, product innovation alone is not sufficient. Effective marketing strategies are necessary to introduce and promote Uis Karo to a broader audience, including millennials and Generation Z, who have different preferences than traditional consumers.

According to research conducted by Muhammad Ayub (2020), product innovation influences purchasing decisions. When a company consistently introduces innovations in product design, consumers will find it easier to seek out the designs they desire. Innovation is an organized creative effort based on knowledge and technology that transforms goods and services into something better than before. Innovations can take the form of new designs, the creation of new benefits, and the use of new technologies. [1].

Marketing plays a significant role in enhancing the appeal of products by conveying the cultural values and quality of Uis Karo to potential consumers. Several marketing strategies that can be implemented include branding the product as a premium traditional fabric, social media campaigns to expand market reach, collaboration with local and international designers, and providing educational information about the history and philosophy of Uis Karo. With a combination of product innovation and effective marketing, this product has great potential to enhance its competitiveness and selling value, as well as expand its market share.

According to research conducted by Susan et al. (2023), it was found that marketing strategies have a positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions at Partidol photocopy business in Sorong City. Although the influence is considered small, this study highlights the importance of implementing effective marketing strategies to encourage purchasing decisions. These findings can serve as a reference for photocopy business owners to pay more attention to marketing aspects in their efforts to increase sales and attract customers. [2].



II. OVERVIEW

A. Uis Karo

Uis Gara or Uis Adat Karo is a traditional garment worn during various cultural and ceremonial events by the Karo ethnic community in North Sumatra. In addition to being official attire for traditional ceremonies and cultural events, this garment was also once worn daily by the traditional Karo people. The name Uis Gara comes from the Karo language, where "Uis" means fabric and "Gara" means red. It is called "red cloth" because it is predominantly colored in red, black, and white, adorned with woven motifs made from gold and silver threads. Generally, Uis Gara is made from cotton that is spun and woven manually and dyed with natural dyes. The production process is similar to that of songket, using non-machine looms. In the mass media, Uis Gara is often referred to as ulos, which is actually a term for traditional fabric from the Batak Land. In the Karo region, the traditional fabric worn by both men and women is known as Uis Gara, with several specific variations such as Uis Nipes or Beka Buluh, among others [3].

B. Product Innovation

Product innovation is a strategy implemented by companies to develop or create new products [4]. Through product innovation, companies can offer variations or advancements in their products, preventing them from appearing monotonous. Product innovation also allows brands to showcase their competitive advantages, providing new experiences for consumers, which in turn can influence consumer satisfaction. Conversely, if a company does not engage in innovation, the potential for consumers to switch to competing brands increases significantly. Therefore, product innovation is believed to play a crucial role in determining consumer purchase interest [5].

C. Buyer Decisions

According to Kotler and Keller (2012: 227), the purchasing decision is a process in which consumers go through several stages, namely recognizing product-related problems, searching for information, evaluating various alternatives, making the purchasing decision, and exhibiting purchasing behavior. This process begins long before the actual purchase occurs and can have long-term impacts [6].

According to Purwanti and Rahmi (2016), purchasing decisions during in-store shopping have benefits because they involve several stages, starting from product recognition, searching for information related to the product, to making a purchase based on the assessment of satisfaction with the product [7].

III. METHODOLOGY

This research methodology employs a qualitative approach to explore the role of marketing in driving product innovation in the purchasing decisions of Uis Karo fabric. The study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of business actors and consumers regarding the innovations applied and the marketing strategies used. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 key informants, consisting of Uis Karo business actors, designers, and consumers who have knowledge about this traditional fabric. The interviews will be conducted either in person or online, depending on the informants' preferences, with questions designed to elicit their views on product innovation, influential marketing elements, and factors affecting purchasing decisions. After data collection, thematic analysis will be used to identify patterns and

themes that emerge from the interviews, allowing for a better understanding of how marketing and product innovation are interconnected in the context of Uis Karo.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

A. Product Innovation and Consumer Appeal

In this study, especially in the context of Uis Karo fabrics, innovation includes changes or adjustments made by businesses to increase the attractiveness and relevance of products in the eyes of consumers. Some important aspects related to product innovation applied by Uis Karo entrepreneurs include:

- **Modern Design Changes**

Business actors in Uis Karo recognize that to attract consumer attention, especially among the younger generation, they need to adopt more contemporary designs. This includes the use of innovative patterns and motifs, as well as adjustments in colors that align better with current trends. For example, fabrics that were originally dominated by traditional motifs are now beginning to be combined with simpler, minimalist designs, making them more appealing to consumers who prefer modern styles.

- **Product Diversification**

Innovation is also evident in product diversification. Entrepreneurs are not only producing fabrics in traditional forms but are also creating derivative products that are more practical and suited to consumer needs. For instance, Uis Karo fabric is now used to make various accessories such as bags, clothing, and jewelry. This diversification offers consumers more choices and introduces Uis Karo into various usage contexts, whether for formal or informal occasions.

- **Use of More Varied Materials**

Traditional Uis Karo fabric is typically made from natural materials, but some business actors are starting to explore the use of newer, more modern, and durable materials. For example, the incorporation of synthetic fiber blends can enhance durability and reduce maintenance requirements. Innovations in material selection also help meet consumer demand for products that are easier to care for and long-lasting, without compromising on beauty and aesthetic value.

- **Importance of Creating Emotional Value**

Beyond the physical aspects of the product, business actors also strive to create a strong emotional value through innovation. Today's consumers are more interested in products that have stories, philosophies, or profound meanings. Uis Karo entrepreneurs integrate cultural narratives and the history of the fabric into each product, so that consumers not only buy the fabric but also gain an understanding of their cultural heritage. This creates an emotional bond that can enhance consumer loyalty.

- **Response to Market Demand**

Uis Karo entrepreneurs strive to remain responsive to market demands by conducting surveys or observing emerging trends. They make an effort to listen to consumer feedback and adjust the products offered accordingly. In this way, innovation is not only proactive but also reactive to changing consumer preferences and needs.

Product innovation in Uis Karo fabric has proven to be an effective strategy for attracting consumer interest. By integrating modern designs, product diversification, and the use of more practical materials, business actors have successfully made this product more relevant to today's consumers. Additionally, efforts to create emotional value through cultural stories also play a crucial role in enhancing appeal and purchasing decisions. Thus, product innovation is not just about aesthetics but also about how the product can meet the expectations and needs of consumers in the modern era.

B. The Importance of Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is a crucial aspect of developing and promoting products, including Uis Karo fabric. In the context of this research, the importance of marketing strategy can be viewed from several perspectives that contribute to enhancing product appeal and sales. Here are some points highlighting the significance of marketing strategy for Uis Karo fabric entrepreneurs:

- **Building Brand Awareness**
An effective marketing strategy helps entrepreneurs build brand awareness among consumers. In a competitive market, consumers are often faced with various product choices. Through planned marketing, entrepreneurs can create strong brand recognition, so when consumers think of a specific product, Uis Karo fabric becomes a memorable choice. High brand awareness can encourage consumers to choose that product when shopping.
- **Attracting Consumer Attention**
Engaging and creative marketing can capture the attention of a broader audience. By using innovative marketing techniques, such as attractive visual campaigns on social media, entrepreneurs can draw the interest of their target market, particularly the younger generation who are more active on digital platforms. Creative and inspiring content, like tutorial videos on how to use the products or stories behind the production process, can enhance consumer interest and encourage them to explore the products further.
- **Creating Emotional Value**
An effective marketing strategy not only focuses on the physical aspects of the product but also creates emotional value for consumers. Entrepreneurs who successfully communicate the stories and cultural values embedded in Uis Karo fabric can build an emotional connection with consumers. This helps consumers feel more connected to the products and the brand, increasing the likelihood of purchasing and recommending the products to others.
- **Identifying and Meeting Consumer Needs**
Good marketing involves a deep understanding of consumer needs and preferences. Uis Karo entrepreneurs who conduct market research can identify emerging trends and demands. With this information, they can tailor their products and marketing strategies to meet consumer expectations, such as introducing new designs or product variations that are relevant to their lifestyle.
- **Enhancing Competitiveness**
In a highly competitive industry, having a good marketing strategy can be a significant differentiating factor. Entrepreneurs who can effectively position their products in the market will

be better equipped to compete with other brands. Marketing strategies that include product differentiation and the uniqueness of Uis Karo fabric can help entrepreneurs stand out amidst various market options, attracting consumers to choose their products.

- **Driving Sales and Growth**
Effective marketing has a direct impact on sales. By increasing brand awareness, attracting consumer attention, and meeting market needs, entrepreneurs can encourage higher purchasing decisions. Additionally, successful marketing strategies can lead to greater customer loyalty, which not only drives repeat sales but also enhances overall business growth.

Overall, marketing strategy plays a vital role in the success of Uis Karo fabric entrepreneurs. Through effective marketing, entrepreneurs can build brand awareness, attract consumer attention, and create strong emotional value. By understanding market needs and competing effectively, marketing strategies not only help increase sales but also contribute to the sustainability and growth of the business in the future. This research emphasizes that the application of appropriate marketing strategies is essential for entrepreneurs to maximize the potential of Uis Karo fabric in an increasingly competitive market.

C. Consumer Perception of Innovation

Consumer perception of innovation is an important factor that can influence purchasing decisions, especially in the context of traditional products like Uis Karo fabric. In this study, consumer perception is divided into several interrelated aspects that provide deep insights into how product innovations are accepted in the market. Below are explanations of some key points related to consumer perception of Uis Karo fabric innovation:

- **Cultural and Traditional Value**
Many consumers view Uis Karo fabric not only as a fashion product but also as a symbol of culture and heritage. Innovations made to the product must respect and preserve the traditional values associated with the fabric. Consumers appreciate innovations that integrate traditional elements with a modern touch, allowing them to feel an emotional connection with the product. This indicates that successful innovations are those that are not only visually appealing but also carry strong cultural significance.
- **Expectations of Quality**
Consumers tend to have high expectations regarding the quality of innovative products. They seek innovations that not only refresh the appearance but also enhance the quality of the fabric, such as durability, comfort, and ease of care. If the innovations meet these expectations, consumers are more likely to make a purchase. Conversely, if the innovation focuses solely on aesthetic aspects without considering quality, consumers may feel disappointed and unsatisfied.
- **Response to New Designs**
New designs applied to Uis Karo products often become a focal point for consumers. Younger consumers, in particular, are attracted to more modern and stylish designs. They believe that innovations in design can make the product more relevant to their lifestyle. Research indicates that consumers welcome innovations that introduce variations in patterns and colors, as long as these

innovations maintain the uniqueness of Uis Karo fabric.

- **Openness to Change**
Consumer attitudes towards innovation are also influenced by their level of openness to change. Some consumers may be more conservative and prefer products that remain true to tradition, while others may be more willing to try something new. Entrepreneurs need to understand this market segmentation to develop targeted innovations. Understanding consumer segment preferences can assist entrepreneurs in determining the types of innovations to implement.
- **User Experience and Reviews**
Reviews and experiences of other users play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions of innovation. Consumers tend to seek recommendations and opinions from others before making purchasing decisions. Therefore, innovations that receive positive reviews from other consumers can enhance product appeal. Entrepreneurs should pay attention to consumer feedback to continuously improve innovations and provide positive experiences for buyers.
- **Price Factors**
Consumer perception of price is also closely related to innovation. Consumers will compare the prices of innovative products with similar products in the market. If consumers feel that the offered innovation provides significant added value, they may be willing to pay more. However, if the innovation is not perceived as a sufficient added value, consumers may find the product too expensive. Thus, entrepreneurs need to set competitive prices for their innovative products.

Consumer perception of Uis Karo fabric innovation encompasses various aspects, including cultural values, quality expectations, responses to new designs, openness to change, user experiences, and price factors. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for entrepreneurs in formulating effective and appealing innovation strategies. By implementing innovations that consider consumer perspectives, entrepreneurs can enhance product appeal and ultimately encourage positive purchasing decisions. This research shows that successful innovations are those that can integrate traditional elements with modern consumer desires, resulting in relevant and highly valued products.

D. Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions for Uis Karo Fabric

Based on the research conducted, several factors significantly influence consumer purchase decisions regarding Uis Karo fabric. Here are the key points identified:

- **Product Quality**
The quality of the fabric, including durability, comfort, and design appeal, is a primary factor influencing purchase decisions. Consumers tend to choose products that offer the best quality, making innovation in materials and production processes very important.
- **Design and Aesthetics**
Attractive designs and product aesthetics have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Consumers, especially younger generations, seek fabrics with modern designs that align with current

fashion trends. Variations in patterns and colors also contribute to the product's appeal.

- **Brand Reputation**
A strong brand reputation plays a crucial role in building consumer trust. Consumers are more likely to prefer brands that are well-known and have proven quality. Therefore, entrepreneurs need to focus on developing a positive brand image.
- **Marketing and Promotion**
Effective marketing strategies, including the use of social media and creative promotions, can enhance product visibility and attract consumer attention. Engaging campaigns and good interactions with consumers can influence purchasing decisions.
- **Reviews and Recommendations**
Reviews from other consumers and recommendations from friends or influencers significantly impact purchase decisions. Consumers tend to seek information from various sources before making decisions, so positive testimonials can boost purchase interest.
- **Price**
Price is an important consideration in purchasing decisions. Consumers often compare the prices of Uis Karo fabric with similar products. If consumers feel that the offered price is commensurate with the quality and value they receive, they are more likely to make a purchase.
- **Cultural and Traditional Value**
Uis Karo fabric holds high cultural value, and many consumers appreciate the traditional aspects of the product. Purchase decisions are often influenced by the desire to support the preservation of local culture and to use products with historical significance.
- **Product Availability**
The availability of products in the market also plays a role in purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to prefer products that are easily accessible and available at desired locations. Sellers need to ensure that Uis Karo fabric is available across various distribution channels.

The factors influencing consumer purchase decisions regarding Uis Karo fabric include product quality, design, brand reputation, marketing strategies, consumer reviews, price, cultural value, and product availability. Understanding these factors is crucial for entrepreneurs to formulate effective strategies to enhance product appeal and sales. By integrating innovations and considering consumer preferences, entrepreneurs can create products that not only meet expectations but also build long-term relationships with customers.

E. Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs in the Uis Karo fabric industry face various challenges in running their businesses, which can affect the success of product innovations and marketing strategies. These challenges can be categorized into several interconnected aspects that require special attention from entrepreneurs. Here is an explanation of the challenges faced by Uis Karo fabric entrepreneurs:

- **Limited Capital**
One of the main challenges faced by entrepreneurs is limited capital. Many entrepreneurs, especially those operating on a small to medium scale, experience difficulties in obtaining sufficient funding for product innovation and marketing improvements. Capital

constraints can hinder their ability to develop new designs, improve product quality, and conduct effective promotions.

- **Intense Competition**

The textile industry, including traditional fabrics, faces increasingly intense competition. Products from other brands, both local and international, often offer lower prices and competitive quality. Uis Karo entrepreneurs must be able to compete not only in terms of product quality but also in price and innovation. This fierce competition can make it challenging to maintain market share and attract consumers.

- **Changing Consumer Preferences**

Continuously changing consumer preferences pose a challenge for entrepreneurs to remain relevant in the market. The innovations implemented must reflect the dynamic preferences and needs of consumers. If entrepreneurs fail to keep up with trends and changing tastes, they risk losing customers and market share. Therefore, in-depth market research and responsiveness to consumer feedback become crucial.

- **Limited Marketing Knowledge**

Many entrepreneurs, especially those from traditional backgrounds, may lack sufficient knowledge about modern marketing strategies, particularly digital marketing. This lack of understanding can hinder their ability to effectively leverage social media and online platforms. Without good marketing, innovative products may not receive the attention they deserve, resulting in stagnant sales.

- **Dependence on Local Markets**

Many Uis Karo fabric entrepreneurs still rely heavily on local markets, which can be problematic when demand declines or during economic crises. Diversifying markets and expanding reach to national and international markets is essential, but it requires well-thought-out resources and strategies. Dependence on a single market can also make entrepreneurs vulnerable to demand fluctuations.

- **Supply Chain Issues**

An unstable supply chain can pose a serious challenge for entrepreneurs. Delays in sourcing raw materials or disruptions in the production process can hinder their ability to meet market demand. This often occurs due to reliance on specific suppliers or unforeseen logistical problems. Efficient supply chain management is crucial to ensure smooth production and product delivery.

The challenges faced by Uis Karo fabric entrepreneurs include limited capital, intense competition, changing consumer preferences, limited marketing knowledge, dependence on local markets, supply chain issues, and regulatory changes. Addressing these challenges requires appropriate strategies, ongoing innovation, and a deep understanding of the market. Entrepreneurs who can adapt and overcome these challenges will have better opportunities for success and growth in this increasingly competitive industry. This research emphasizes the importance of agility and resilience in facing challenges to achieve business sustainability and enhance the competitiveness of Uis Karo fabric in the market.

F. The Role of Marketing in Uis Karo Purchase Decisions

Marketing plays a crucial role in determining consumer purchase decisions regarding Uis Karo fabric. An effective marketing strategy not only increases product visibility but also builds a strong relationship between the brand and consumers. Through planned marketing activities, entrepreneurs can enhance brand awareness of Uis Karo fabric among consumers. Marketing campaigns that involve social media, advertising, and promotions capture public attention, leading to greater recognition of the product. High brand awareness makes consumers more likely to consider Uis Karo fabric when making purchase decisions.

Additionally, effective marketing uses appealing visual elements to stimulate consumer interest. Images, videos, and other creative content can showcase the beauty and uniqueness of Uis Karo fabric. By presenting attractive visuals, entrepreneurs can create a positive impression and draw the attention of potential buyers.

A good marketing strategy also involves identifying and determining the right target market. Entrepreneurs need to understand the demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics of consumers to tailor messages and delivery methods effectively. By targeting the right audience, the chances of influencing purchase decisions increase. Through marketing, entrepreneurs can communicate the value and advantages of Uis Karo fabric to consumers. Information about quality, unique designs, and the cultural significance of the fabric can be conveyed through various communication channels. Consumers who understand the added value of the product are more likely to make a purchase.

Interactive marketing, such as the use of social media, allows entrepreneurs to build closer relationships with consumers. Responding to inquiries and feedback from consumers can foster a sense of engagement and trust. A good relationship between the brand and consumers can encourage loyalty and repeat purchase decisions. Additionally, appropriate promotional strategies, including discounts and special offers, can drive purchase decisions. When consumers feel they are getting added value through promotions, they are more inclined to make a purchase, and appealing promotions can create a sense of urgency, prompting consumers to act quickly.

Marketing also leverages reviews and testimonials from previous consumers to build trust. Positive reviews can influence purchase decisions by providing social proof that the product is worth buying. Entrepreneurs need to promote positive experiences from other customers to attract new consumers. With all these aspects, it is clear that marketing plays a significant role in influencing purchase decisions for Uis Karo fabric. Through effective marketing strategies, entrepreneurs can enhance their chances of success in the market and encourage positive purchase decisions.

G. The Role of Product Innovation in Uis Karo Purchase Decisions

Product innovation plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions regarding Uis Karo fabric, which is viewed not just as a textile product but also as a part of cultural heritage with aesthetic and symbolic value. Firstly, innovation often relates to enhancing product quality, whether in terms of materials, production techniques, or finishing processes. Uis Karo fabric made from high-quality materials and innovative manufacturing techniques can attract consumers seeking durable and comfortable products. Additionally, innovation in design and aesthetics is a key factor in capturing

consumer interest. By presenting patterns, colors, and styles that are more modern and in line with current fashion trends, entrepreneurs can expand their product appeal. Innovative designs that combine traditional elements with contemporary touches will enhance consumer interest in purchasing the fabric.

Innovation also aligns with market trends, making consumers who seek products that reflect their lifestyles more inclined to purchase updated fabrics. Furthermore, innovations that involve storytelling or emphasize cultural values can create an emotional bond between the product and consumers. Uis Karo fabric accompanied by stories about its origins, manufacturing processes, or the meanings behind its motifs adds value in the eyes of consumers and increases the likelihood of purchase. An enhanced shopping experience is also part of innovation, with the use of technology in marketing, such as e-commerce platforms that make it easier for consumers to access and buy products. This indicates that a pleasant and practical shopping experience can improve purchase decisions.

Responding to consumer feedback is another factor that strengthens the role of innovation. Entrepreneurs who can listen to and adapt their products according to consumer input will build loyalty and trust. Consumers who feel heard are more likely to return for further purchases. Additionally, innovation allows entrepreneurs to differentiate their products from competitors. By offering something unique, such as distinctive motifs or weaving techniques, entrepreneurs can attract consumers seeking uniqueness.

Overall, strategically implemented product innovation significantly contributes to purchase decisions regarding Uis Karo fabric by enhancing product appeal and encouraging purchase decisions, while ensuring sustainability and business growth in a competitive market.

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