The Customer Experience of Fashion Collaboration Branding Uniqlo Marni in Indonesia

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Abstract. Uniqlo's collaboration with luxury brand Marni brings Marni's signature aesthetic at an affordable price. This study aims to describe the customer experience of Uniqlo Marni products in Indonesia. The research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured research by interviewing Uniqlo customers consisting of models, legal consultants, entrepreneurs, and employees based on the Schmitt concept. In the perceived component, the customer is proud to own this collaboration product. Then, the think component occurs when a customer succeeds in buying products from a well-known brand at a rational price. The customer act component by purchasing this collaboration product carries the genderless theme in accordance with the lifestyle of young people who prioritize appearance. Next, the relate component occurs when the customer is satisfied with the Uniqlo Marni collaboration product and follows the progress of the collaboration. The conclusion of this study shows that customers acknowledge that this collaboration has succeeded in creating memorable experiences, and they are looking forward to Uniqlo's collaboration with other brands.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, brands are competing to create various promotional strategies. This leads to the creation of a brand becoming one of the main ways that producers use in terms of publicizing products. A study conducted by Bain & Company shows that generations Y, Z, and Alpha will be the biggest buyers of luxury brands in 2030 [1].

Evgeny's research shows that through collaborative branding strategies by luxury brands and retail clothing, it is useful to build a sense of exclusivity and mutual benefit. For luxury brands, collaborative branding is needed to build initial relationships with potential customers in the future. As for retail clothing, branding collaborations are needed to attract consumers who are interested in collaborating with luxury brands [2].

Uniqlo Marni is a collaboration between a Japanese retail clothing brand and a luxury brand from Milan, Italy. Uniqlo, a well-known brand from Japan, has successfully expanded into the fashion world in 25 countries and has more than 2,250 outlets [3].

In 2021, Uniqlo is back to collaborating with other designers. This time Uniqlo collaborated with Marni, a luxury fashion brand from Italy [4]. Under the direction of Marni's Creative Director, Francesco Risso, this collaboration was launched in Indonesia in July 2021. Marni's unique brand characteristics in combining motifs and shapes are combined with Uniqlo, which carries the perfection of LifeWear clothing.

With the concept of 'Timeless Essentials', Uniqlo and Marni present universal clothing products. PR Uniqlo Indonesia, Yulia Rachmawati, explained that this universal concept presents unisex clothing that can be used regardless of gender [5].

Uniqlo Marni collaboration products are very different from the usual Uniqlo products. Uniqlo is known as casual clothing with minimalist designs and colours, but through this collaboration, it presents a flashy design and colour.

To add to the euphoria of the Uniqlo and Marni collaboration in Indonesia, Uniqlo presented a unique exhibition event to welcome the collection. The exhibition is located at the front yard of Senayan City, Jakarta from July 22 - 24, 2022, before the collaboration products can be purchased on July 29, 2022. The uniqueness of this collaboration is also clear from the unique exhibition.

The 'Timeless Essentials, Remixed' installation is expected to spread excitement and energy ahead of the launch of the Uniqlo Marni collaboration collection. Through activities carried out ahead of the launch day, Uniqlo and Marni provide a different experience for visitors. Those who came to this installation could enjoy the complete products from this collection which they could then purchase only through the official Uniqlo Indonesia website and Pondok Indah Mall 3 outlets. In addition, they provided an experience through a fashion show that was unique from most fashion shows.

In addition to the fashion show, Uniqlo and Marni also invited many digital influencers in Indonesia to enliven the preview of their collaboration collection. Starting from Luna Maya, Andien, Bio One, Alike Islamadina, Alegeor, Sarah Azka, and many other personalities who participated in promoting this collaboration.

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The perceived power of influence from these digital influencers not only helps generate engagement, but also increases expected value and behavioural intentions related to the recommended brand. In addition, brand engagement in self-concept increases the expected value of a brand and both also affect the intention to purchase the recommended brand [6]

The promotions carried out by Uniqlo and Marni are quite diverse, in addition to inviting macro to micro influencers, uploading information through the Instagram account @uniqloindonesia, and collaborating with many digital media. This has led to more diverse types of remarks about the Uniqlo Marni collaboration. The focus of this research discusses the customer experience of the Uniqlo and Marni collaboration in Indonesia to find out the satisfaction of people in Indonesia with collaborative fashion products.

The question that describes the consumer experience is how their experience in was getting Uniqlo Marni collaboration products.

2 Literature review

2.1 Marketing communication

Marketing communication is an activity carried out by companies to persuade, inform, and remind consumers about the products or brands they sell. This can take place directly or indirectly [7].

According to Sukoco, marketing communication can be understood by describing 2 main terms, namely communication and marketing. Communication is the process of delivering messages from communicators to communicants. Marketing is a set of activities when a company or an organization shares the values held between them to their customers [8].

Although the definitions of marketing activities and marketing communications are different, they are still interrelated when carrying out work process activities. Marketing activities are activities that are packaged by the company to be shown/shown to the wider community. The goal is to serve a continuous audience who will benefit from all marketing activities. Meanwhile, marketing communication is an activity of a company that has the aim of providing information, persuading, and reminding consumers who are aware or not aware of the products we offer to the wider community. Marketing communication has several elements of combined marketing that have links to communication activities. These elements include product, price, promotion, and place. These activities have their own elements of value that can be conveyed to the wider community.

2.2 Branding

In the book Marketing and Brands (Planning & Strategy), Anang defines a brand as a name, sign, symbol, design or also a combination of the points mentioned above to be used to characterize an individual, organization or company on the goods and services it sells which is useful in distinguishing it from service products from other companies. A brand can be characterized as strong if a brand can be recognized by citizens, high brand association in a product or service, positive perceptions from the market and high consumer loyalty to the brand [9].

Anang said, with the existence of a brand that produces a product that is different from other products, this is expected to make it easier for consumers to choose which products they will consume according to various considerations. With that, consumers can also become loyal to a brand, or this is commonly known as brand loyalty. A consumer's loyalty to a brand starts from an introduction, then continues to become a choice, and then becomes an adherence to a brand [9].

Branding is all activities related to the promotion of a brand or product symbol. Branding has functions, namely creating identification or brand awareness; guaranteeing certain levels such as quality, quantity, satisfaction; and helping with promotion [10].

Meanwhile, according to Swasty, the definition of branding is a program in focusing or specializing and projecting the values contained in a brand. This includes creating differences between products and customers in the buyer's decision-making process and providing values to the company [11].

In addition, that the communication activities used by the company for a process framework to build or also raise the brand are activities referred to as branding [12].

2.3 Collaboration branding

Collaborative branding is a combination of the two brands, or even more in presenting a new and unique product [13]. The purpose of branding collaboration is to provide an increase in the value of a brand by uniting the two brands by collaborating [14].

That the association or unification formed in a branding collaboration can increase brand equity due to the exchange of value from the collaborating brands. It is also defined as a collaboration where two or more well-known brands in the market combine to create an offering [14].

From this definition, collaborative branding is used by two or more brands to present a collaborative product whose products have the same target market or can also if it has the aim of penetrating new markets. Collaborative branding has advantages as well as disadvantages in becoming a branding strategy.

2.4 Customer experience

The customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provokes a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual) [15].

Customer experience is an internal and subjective customer response because of direct or indirect interactions with the company. This direct relationship is usually due to consumer initiative. This usually happens in the purchasing and service department.
Meanwhile, indirect relationships often involve unplanned encounters, such as product and brand appearances, advertisements, and other promotional events [16].

Customer experience is a cognitive recognition, and this perception can increase the value of products and services. Customer experience is the result of consumer interaction with the company physically and emotionally. The results of this interaction can imprint on the minds of consumers and affect consumer assessments of the company [17].

The customer experience component is divided into 5 dimensions which can be used as the basis for analysing overall experience marketing [18].

a. Sense, which is the experience gained related to the five senses such as sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell that feel the product or service offered.

b. Feel, which is the experience gained related to the feelings felt by consumers.

c. Think, namely the experience obtained is related to the creative and rational stimulation of consumers. This requires intelligence with the aim of creating cognitive experiences and problem-solving by involving consumers creatively.

d. Act, which is the experience obtained by consumers related to lifestyle, physical activities, and the image that is formed.

e. Relate, which is the experience obtained after consumers visit which then relates to other people or communities because they have the same relationship.

3 Research methods

The research approach used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is a type of research to explore and master the meaning in several people or groups of people who come from social problems. In general, qualitative research is used for research on history, community life, individual behaviour, concepts or phenomena, social problems that occur, and so on [19].

The nature of the research and the approach used in this research is descriptive which has the aim of analysing systematically, factually, and accurately about the facts and nature of the object of research. Descriptive statistics are statistics that function to describe or provide an overview of the object under study through sample or population data without making an analysis to present conclusions that can be applied to the community. Informants in descriptive research are those who are experts in this research and have accurate information [20].

This research uses a qualitative research approach because it aims to analyse the customer experience of the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration in Indonesia in detail. The research data was obtained from unstructured interviews with customers of the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration.

This research uses a narrative research design. The reason for using a narrative approach is in accordance with the purpose of this research is to analyse the customer experience of the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration in Indonesia. Therefore, the researcher investigated the experiences of informants regarding their experience of being a customer of the collaboration by conducting unstructured interviews.

The primary data source in this study was obtained by means of semi-structured interviews, which is a process of extracting, open, and free information with a research focus directed at the center or research problem [20].

Researchers use semi-structure interviews to collect primary data, or data directly from the person or party under study.

To collect data, researchers will conduct interviews with customers SG (models)-potential customer, NM (Business Owner) potential customer and has been customer since 2013, AS (Legal Consultant- impulsive customer and has been customer 2015, and RC (Graphic Designer)-frugal Customer and has been customer 2017 as informant. Qualitative research does not recognize a minimum number of samples and informants are taken in small numbers, even in certain cases only one informant can be used [21].

Secondary data sources in this study are in the form of additional information that can be obtained by tracing the news about the Uniqlo Indonesia collaboration on online news portals, social media, and so on. Activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and take place continuously until completion [21]. Data analysis techniques according to Strauss & Corbin data analysis in qualitative research has 3 types of coding, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

The data validity technique in this study is source triangulation which is carried out by conducting interviews with different informants, namely comparing the results of interviews and observations where the results between these informants may be different [22].

4 Result and discussion

In 2021, Uniqlo collaborated on branding with Marni, a luxury fashion brand from Italy. As a luxury fashion brand, Marni's work is out of reach for most of the public. But through this collection, Uniqlo brings Marni's signature aesthetic to the masses, at a more affordable price.

Being one of the ways to communicate, Uniqlo's collaborations always receive attention from its customers. Collaborations that Uniqlo has done include with KAWS, an American artist and designer, Brian Donnelly, with the likes of JW Anderson and Jil Sander, highly successful designers, and many more.

Under the direction of Marni's Creative Director, Francesco Risso, the Uniqlo and Marni collaboration collection is full of vibrant prints and colours, blending into one aesthetic that is different from the usual Uniqlo clothing. Marni presents an attractive and energetic design through its characteristics ranging from printing patterns, shapes, to solid colour patterns that are presented. While Uniqlo's own touch is represented by innovations in the functionality of clothing, distinctive
cutting, materials that are known to be lightweight and comfortable to modern details.

The Spring/Summer 2022 collection was the first Uniqlo Marni collection. From floral prints, plaid, to stripes, Uniqlo and Marni mix it up with vibrant colours. At the end of the year, the second Uniqlo Marni collection was launched, the Fall/Winter 2022 collection. With a concept that still emphasizes simplicity, the Uniqlo Marni collection again plays on colourful motifs to celebrate the festive atmosphere at the end of the year. The difference between this collection and the previous one is the 1960s aesthetic.

The application of the five dimensions of the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration customer experience as follows:

4.1 Sense

Sense is an experience gained related to the five senses such as sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell that feel the product or service offered [18].

The experience can be felt by customers for the first time when Uniqlo Indonesia organizes an exhibition that holds the Uniqlo Marni collection, but the collection can be purchased after 5 days after the exhibition. That is because Uniqlo prioritizes online sales. In the exhibition, customers get experience directly through their five senses.

Others learned about the collaboration at the “Timeless Essentials” exhibition at Senayan City, July 22-24, 2022, from social media or when visiting Senayan City, they can directly see the collaboration collection exhibition with complete information. The event was also equipped with fashion show activities.

Informant SG’s experience when he came to the Uniqlo Marni installation,

“In the installation, I can see all the Uniqlo Marni collections. The explanation about the collection was also very informative. Also, as an influencer who was invited to the event, I had the opportunity to use products from the collaboration. I didn’t expect it because I’ve been a loyal Uniqlo customer since 2018. Then at the event I got to see other products and became interested in some other clothes.” (Interview with SGT, on January 12, 2023).

Informant AS also came to the exhibition event at Senayan City,

“I happen to work across from Senayan City. At that time, my office friends and I were having lunch there, and it turned out to be really crowded because of the event. I’ve been eyeing the Uniqlo Marni collaboration products, so I took a quick look at all the products. But I only took a glimpse because the fashion show was busy. So, after finding one that I really liked the model, I continued to look at other models on the Uniqlo app.” (Interview with AS, on January 30, 2023).

Meanwhile, informants NM and RC have different experiences. As an Instagram follower of @uniqloindonesia, she found out about the Uniqlo and Marni collaboration in Indonesia through the official account. She bought this product through the Uniqlo website (https://www.uniqlo.com/id/id/).

This was her first experience directly seeing the collections, giving her a pleasant sensation.

“When I went to Uniqlo PIM 3, I was so excited to see all the products! Everything was really good. Then because this collaboration collection is very different from Uniqlo’s calm products, it makes my eyes immediately look at this collection.” (Interview with NM, on January 30, 2023).

4.2 Feel

Feel is an experience that is obtained in relation to the feelings felt by consumers [18].

Through the Uniqlo Marni collaboration that is present in Indonesia, the experience of touching emotions that consumers get is very diverse.

Among them for SG, as a Uniqlo consumer since 2018 until now, the collaboration between Uniqlo and Marni has provided experiences that touch his emotions, including the opportunity given by Uniqlo to become a customer who has the opportunity to use this collaboration product before it is marketed.

Informant AS also had a disappointing experience when making a purchase through the Uniqlo app. In his interview he explained his surprise.

“I was really surprised when I saw the product I bought directly. This is because the first time I saw a glimpse at the exhibition at Sency, this was one of the products I was eyeing. Now because I only saw a glimpse because the exhibition was so crowded, I looked again from the Uniqlo application. When I saw it on the app, I wasn’t sure which one to buy, because it was so good. But finally, I decided to buy the pink plaid sleeveless. Eh, when I bought the shirt directly, I was surprised because the pink was oval, haha!” (Interview with AS, on January 30, 2023).

As for informant NM, who has a different experience, this collection gives a touching feeling because she can have Marni products that collaborate with Luxury brands at an affordable price.

In contrast to RC’s experience, who admitted that he had never known the Marni brand before he saw Uniqlo Indonesia’s publication on his Instagram. When visiting the Uniqlo outlet at Pondok Indah Mall 3, it was her first experience seeing the works of this collaboration. she admitted that she felt happy with the existence of products from this Uniqlo and Marni collaboration.

4.3 Think

Think is an experience related to the creative and rational stimulation of [18]. It demands intelligence with
the aim of creating cognitive and problem-solving experiences by engaging consumers creatively.

The collaboration between Uniqlo and Marni presents unique collections. Marni provides attractive and energetic designs through its characteristics ranging from printing patterns, shapes, to solid colour patterns that are presented. While Uniqlo’s own touch is represented by innovations in clothing functionality, distinctive cutting, materials that are known to be lightweight and comfortable to modern details.

Different from Uniqlo’s previous collaborations, this collaboration provides new colours for loyal Uniqlo Indonesia users. The collision of motifs found in this collection makes customers have their own creative experience to mix and match their fashion. In addition, seeing the products of this collection triggered rational thinking and creativity from each informant.

SG’s experience when seeing all the Uniqlo Marni collaboration collections gave her experience in mixing and matching this collection gave her an unforgettable experience. This collection became a challenge for SG in being creative with her fashion choices. On the other hand, she still maintains rational thinking to choose clothes to buy.

A similar experience was also obtained by informant AS who also attended the Uniqlo Marni collaboration collection exhibition. According to him, there were so many clothes on display that it was difficult for him to make a choice.

Apart from AS, a similar experience was also felt by NM who also likes the Marni brand. NM always follows the development of the Marni brand. NM expressed an experience that likes to mix and match fashion. NM makes purchases according to her character who likes classic monochrome. She decided to buy a product from the Uniqlo Marni collaboration in the form of a striped T-Shirt that suits her style of dress.

In contrast to the experience of informant RC, experience is felt in triggering RC’s rational thinking because the price is relatively more expensive than other Uniqlo products. RC then decided to buy a shirt product with a price around 250 thousand.

4.4 Act

Act is an experience that customers get related to lifestyle or lifestyle, physical activities, and the image that is formed [18].

Through this collaboration, Uniqlo and Marni carry the theme of genderless, currently the world fashion is heading in that direction [23]. From this lifestyle, Uniqlo and Marni see the opportunity that the universal trend for women’s fashion and men’s fashion in this collection.

With this concept, of course, the response of Indonesian people is diverse. Indonesian artist Bio One has the experience of uploading Uniqlo Marni fashion with a genderless theme on his Instagram account, with the caption "Fashion has no gender" [24].

Apart from Bio One, the experience was also obtained by informant RC who also has a genderless lifestyle. As a woman, RC likes to use men's clothing as her style of dressing.

NM informant with this lifestyle. She explained that the existence of this collaboration made her explore her dressing style even more. She explained that although she is not too ‘boyish’ in style, it does not extinguish her enthusiasm about the clothing choices in this collaboration.

4.5 Relate

Relate is an experience gained after a customer visits and then relates to the brand or also to other people/communities because they have the same connection.

Informant SG's influencer experience as a Uniqlo customer since 2018 who was invited to the launch of the Uniqlo Marni collaboration in Indonesia. His experience in the Uniqlo Marni collaboration event made him have a strong bond with Uniqlo. As someone who has liked the Marni brand for a long time but has not owned Marni products, this is the first opportunity to collect collaboration products and is a fun thing for her. A blue shirt with a floral print was SG's choice for the first collaboration product.

After that, SG continued to follow the development of the collaboration until the end of 2022, buying the second Uniqlo Marni collaboration collection product again. The lime colour vest-type fashion was SG's choice in this second collaboration.

The difference in Customer Experience from the 4 informants can be seen in Table 1.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Level Experience</th>
<th>Customer Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM (Business Owner) has been a customer since 2015</td>
<td>Potential Customer</td>
<td>An enjoyable online shopping experience for Uniqlo Marni products through the website, even though the products sold are limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG (Top Model) has been a customer since 2016</td>
<td>Potential Customer</td>
<td>Experience as a priority customer who can make purchases before the collaboration product is sold to the public. That's because as an endorser specifically invited to attend the exhibition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS (Legal Consultant) has been a customer since 2015</td>
<td>Impulsive Customer</td>
<td>Came to the exhibition but was not satisfied because there were so many visitors that it was not enough to explore various types of collaboration products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC (Graphic Designer) has been a customer since 2017</td>
<td>Frugal Customer</td>
<td>Come straight to one of the outlets and be interested in collaboration products because of a special promotion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research Result (2023)

Discussion

From the research results above, there are some interesting findings. Through the Uniqlo Marni
collaboration, these two brands present limited edition clothing products with striking aesthetics characteristic of Marni and comfortable clothing quality typical of Uniqlo.

As a marketing communication strategy, Uniqlo Indonesia uses social media Instagram and TikTok, as well as offline by holding an exhibition event held at Senayan City. The products can be purchased online, through the Uniqlo Indonesia App and Website. In addition, this product can also be purchased on a limited basis at Uniqlo Pondok Indah Mall 3 outlets.

Customer experience is obtained in various ways. First sense, the Uniqlo Marni exhibition event at Senayan City, as the customer's first experience in seeing directly with the five senses. Feel, customers get excited, disappointed, and proud when they can buy the collaboration product.

Think, the experience of determining a purchase as a form of rational customer thinking. Act, buying this collaboration product carries the genderless theme according to their lifestyle as young people who prioritize appearance. Relate, customers are satisfied with the existence of Uniqlo Marni collaboration products and follow the development of this collaboration.

Compared to research with quantitative methods regarding the branding collaboration of fashion designer Alexander Wang with H&M clothing retail, the collaboration of luxury brand and clothing retail increases the awareness intention of the luxury brand [25].

This is in line with the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration. In addition, the study also states that customers are more trusted in products that collaborate with luxury brands than products in general.

The characteristics of the 4 informants are that they come from different professions but they like the Uniqlo Marni collaboration products because the patterns are attractive and full of colour, different from the simple Uniqlo.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the research results and discussion of the customer experience of the Uniqlo Marni branding collaboration in Indonesia can be described as follows:

Cognitive recognition and perceptions that customers get about this collaboration as a limited output collaboration product make each customer have their own pride through Uniqlo Marni collaboration clothing, so this increases the value of a Uniqlo Marni collaboration product.

Interactions that are formed both online and offline, customers have different experiences. There are various emotions and views about this collaboration product.

The results of these diverse interactions are imprinted in the minds of customers, whether through onsite or online, Uniqlo Marni has succeeded in providing a memorable experience for its customers.

Five components of customer experience:

a. Sense, customers can see, touch, and feel the complete collection in several outlet displays. In addition, through Instagram content uploaded by Uniqlo Indonesia, the sense dimension is also felt by customers because they can see photos and videos featuring the collection.

b. Feel, customers did not expect to be able to use fashion from Luxury brands. Customers feel proud to use this Uniqlo Marni collaboration collection.

c. Think, attractive and energetic designs make consumers develop their creativity to mix and match these clothes, but on the other hand also provide rational thinking for customers in determining the purchase of a product at a price that is relatively more expensive than Uniqlo products in general.

d. Act, consumers feel the experience of the image formed through a collection that carries the theme of genderless fashion. The customer with this lifestyle, this collection provides experience in using fashion from a well-known brand.

e. Relate, the Uniqlo Marni Collaboration relates to the younger generation who are on a limited budget but get luxurious fashion.

5.2 Recommendation

From the results of the interviews with the four informants, it is hoped that Uniqlo will increase product collaborations with various luxury brands besides Marni. There is pride for customers to get Luxury brand products.

Future research can use quantitative methods by conducting surveys of customers who buy Uniqlo collaboration products with Marni and other Uniqlo collaborations. This is to find out whether collaboration products are preferred in Indonesia.

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