

CORPORATE ACTION ON PLASTIC POLLUTION (THE BODY SHOP CASE STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, plastic waste has resulted in numerous negative environmental impacts. To mitigate these effects, businesses have been adopting sustainable practices, including the production of eco-friendly products. The Body Shop, a well-known cruelty-free beauty brand, has implemented its corporate social responsibility initiative, "Bring Back Our Bottle," which aims to encourage customers and the public to recycle empty plastic packaging at their local stores. However, the success and impact of this program have yet to be fully determined. To assess its effectiveness, a qualitative research study will be conducted using a combination of online observation, data collection, and interviews with a "Sustainability Associate" and a Value Manager at The Body Shop. The findings will provide insight into the impact of the "Bring Back Our Bottle" program on plastic waste reduction. The results of this study, which indicate a significant influence on HDPE plastic waste reduction, will be useful for future marketers seeking to optimize their corporate social responsibility strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ocean is subjected to an influx of more than 8 million metric tons of plastic waste annually [19]. This serves as a compelling indication of the necessity to address this issue, as failing to do so could result in the exacerbation of the problem to a magnitude that may become beyond our ability to effectively mitigate. In the past decades, plastic usage and manufacturing have rapidly increased viewing from how it is relatively low in cost rather than other materials [7]. The proliferation of plastic waste would result in a multitude of negative environmental impacts that could harm both humans and the planet. Studies have indicated that the incineration of plastics after disposal poses a risk to human health [18]. By 2050, it is projected that plastic waste will have a devastating impact on marine life in the ocean [2]. The beauty industry, which heavily relies on plastic packaging for its products, is among the businesses that contribute to this issue, as consumers often factor in the packaging in their purchasing decisions [26]. Therefore, this explains how more than 50% of the materials used in cosmetic product packaging are plastics [10]. This is because the company needs to reduce costs and at the same time maintain premium quality.

The "Bring Back Our Bottle" initiative implemented by The Body Shop Indonesia was established in response to the severe environmental impacts of plastic waste, particularly in regard to product packaging. According to reports, the program incentivizes customer participation through the provision of rewards in the form of points, which can be redeemed for free products or discounts [24]. This approach is expected to increase awareness and involvement in the initiative and could potentially contribute to mitigating plastic waste as an environmental issue. Nevertheless, it remains imperative to evaluate the efficacy of this program and determine its impact on addressing this problem. Also, the details of the program execution are not mentioned clearly to the public, like the whole recycling process.

The Body Shop is undoubtedly one of the well-known businesses, both commercially and in terms of academic research [8]. The company, which is well-known as a "cruelty-free brand" [23] creates this program to encourage people to protect the environment. By returning The Body Shop packaging and bottles to its outlets, which are spread out across Indonesia, the Bring Back Our Bottle (BBOB) program hopes to inform customers about the responsible use of plastic packaging [24]. Previous research has demonstrated how the BBOB program affects the Body Shop's brand love, brand image, and brand loyalty [24]. Huang claims that brand loyalty is realized in two ways: through consumer behavior toward the brand and as a result of outside forces/factors [14]. On the other hand, another reference asserts that brand loyalty demonstrates how consumers or individuals engage with the community to learn about the brand [5]. A company's environmentally friendly program will certainly help it improve its overall brand love,

brand image, and brand loyalty. It might also be a part of their marketing plan to open new markets and expand their company as a whole.

Nevertheless, subsequent research has not adequately represented or examined the actual environmental impact of the BBOB initiative. In order to address and fill the gaps, this study will focus on how environmental protection such as the BBOB program is actually having an effect, particularly on Indonesia's efforts to reduce plastic waste. The total amount of plastic waste discovered in Indonesia, classified by its various types, including "Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE), Vinyl/Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), Polypropylene (PP), Polystyrene (PS), and OTHER (Other kinds of plastic products), can be used to demonstrate the impact [11].

Through the program, "Bring Back our Bottle", The Body Shop encourages customers to return unused packaging to nearby stores as a form of The Body Shop's commitment in the form of care and environmental responsibility [15]. According to Ramesh et. al, a company that is consistent with carrying out corporate social responsibility (CSR) will convince customers to build a favorable attitude and establish loyalty to the brand [22]. When companies engage in corporate social responsibility in efforts to uphold ethical, moral, and social values, they are deemed value-driven [16]. Thus, a value-driven corporate social responsibility is equivalent to doing the right thing, as one can infer and understand the whole underlying motives for companies to be involved in CSR. On the other hand, companies that engage in CSR solely to increase profit and sales are economically driven [4]. Thus, companies that are economically driven engaging in CSR take a competitive advantage to also enhance brand image and reputation.

High-Density Polyethylene or 'HDPE' is a recyclable and widely used thermoplastic, utilized in a wide range of products, including toys for children, food containers, home chemical bottles, and many rigid containers [6]. According to the source, recycled HDPE is an ideal material for entrepreneurs or business owners as it can be recycled endlessly with simple household equipment. Since millions of tonnes of plastic ended up in the ocean, one of the most favorable plastic disposal methods is pyrolysis. The recovery of monomers from plastic waste is said to be easier with HDPE waste [9]. Thus, the main reason why 'The Body Shop' would like to acquire HDPE for their CSR program is because the conversion of HDPE waste is easier and more desirable. Thus, the main aim of the program "Bring Back our Bottle" by The Body Shop is to mitigate plastic waste. The Body Shop is committed to carrying out this CSR stems from a concern about the rising amount of plastic waste. The CSR also focuses on how it will affect The Body Shop's brand image, loyalty, and love, such as the research conducted by Azzahra & Facchria. In addition, another research is conducted that The Body Shop are determined to use plastics that are of high-density polyethylene to carry out their CSR. Thus, it still needs to be identified the effectiveness of the BBOB program in mitigating plastic waste including the overall recycling process.

2. METHOD

Type and Data Source

To investigate the data and topic, this study employed a qualitative research methodology. According to Patrik Aspers and Ugo Corte, qualitative research focuses on many approaches and takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject. This means that qualitative studies examine phenomena in their natural contexts while seeking to understand them from the perspective of the meanings that individuals assign to them [3]. To investigate the data and topic, this study employed a qualitative research methodology. According to Patrik Aspers and Ugo Corte, qualitative research focuses on many approaches and takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject. This means that qualitative studies examine phenomena in their natural contexts while seeking to understand them from the perspective of the meanings that individuals assign to them [3].

This study was performed in two methods, primarily utilizing observation and interview, where online observation was the main method used to collect the data in order to investigate and fill the gaps in the prior research. According to one source, qualitative observational studies aimed at comprehending behavior and relationships as they take place in real-time employ observation as an empirical research approach [17].

Analysis Method

The authors conducted online observation in October on a variety of The Body Shop Indonesia platforms in an effort to understand the overall impact of the BBOB program. These platforms included the company's websites and Instagram. Knowing how the BBOB program works and what impacts it has on the environment was the phase that was executed during the observation. Data were gathered from the corporate website and social media accounts in order to ascertain if this program has decreased the volume of plastic waste, generally the HDPE plastic-type in Indonesia.

The identified data found on those platforms were analysed further and converted into a systematic table consisting of types of platforms, data, analysis, and proof. This table was made to ease the process of analysis to conclude what impacts the BBOB program has gave on the environment. To validate the data found on the company websites and social media platforms, an interview was conducted with the brand values manager of The Body Shop Indonesia, Dita Agustia. She was conducting sustainability audits and program development for the BBOB program. The interview was conducted by the authors in the month of October through email that was gained from a LinkedIn connection.

The interview questions were sent out through her email. The interview was performed asynchronously and answered via email. The research questions were answered and validated through this interview with her. Furthermore, the answer from the interview was analysed and interpreted in a structured manner. Significant information was extracted to answer the research questions which included how the BBOB program has decreased the amount of HDPE plastic waste in Indonesia. Thus, a conclusion was drawn to answer these research questions (see appendix 1.)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Online Observation

The online observation concluded that the Bring Back our Bottle (BBOB) program has successfully bring great impact on the environment, especially in Indonesia. This was seen from the data retrieved, where The Body Shop have successfully collected 10 million bottles of packaging from its customers, which is equal to 65 Sumatran elephants or 390 tonnes. It is 0,22% of the amount of plastic waste from the whole country, which is 175,342 tonnes in average daily [21]. This shows the significance of the amount of plastics this company have successfully collected, thus, infers to how the data they have shown is not negligible and very impactful.

Additionally, the BBOB program by The Body Shop have also been awarded many rewards that are known by a lot of people in the industry. This portrays the public acknowledgement and awareness towards change happening now, setting this program as the pioneer [24]. Therefore, many other beauty brands would start to create programs with similar goals as BBOB to achieve public interest and positive feedbacks. This is another impact that may be accountable for reducing plastic waste and the environmental issues that are induced by it. Furthermore, the company also improves its relationship by achieving these awards and creating campaigns and workshops.

Table 1. Observation Result

Platforms	Data	Analysis
Company Website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There were about 10 million empty packaging/bottles returned each year as per 2022. 2. The BBOB program won two awards: one from Indonesia's Best Corporate Social Campaign for the category of Corporate Social Marketing and another from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia for its waste reduction initiative (Waste Reduction Initiative). 3. Numerous campaigns (showcase, raise awareness, upcycle and recycle workshop) 	<p>From the data mentioned about how much plastics that they have successfully retrieved, this is a significant amount that might be effective in inducing change. 10 million empty bottles is equal to 390 tonnes, which is not exactly a small amount even though it is considered small when compared to the total amount of plastic waste in Indonesia. This is because this figure will trigger other beauty brands to follow this program as a pioneer for change. Additionally, this movement of change was proven by the awards that this brand have achieved, as it is noticed by the government and the society. Aside from the program itself, many campaigns have been done to encourage a lot of the customers to start recycling their empty product packaging.</p>
Instagram	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Created a store branch in department 23 Paskal, Bandung which is 100% made of trash or waste (cigarettes, wood waste, recycled plastic from packaging, and used cardboards). 	<p>The fact that they have successfully created a whole store with wastes might possibly inspire a lot of people to start becoming a part of change. One of the materials used to build the store was their used packaging, which hints on how the accumulated plastics retrieved were put to good use.</p>

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| 5. Regularly raised awareness of environmental issues like global climate change | They have also utilized their audience from social media like Instagram to raise many environmental issues regularly and create |
| 6. Continuous recycling campaigns | campaigns, which also contributes to bringing change and giving significant impact in reducing plastic waste or even alleviate environmental problems in general. |
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Green campaigns and recycling workshops were also a part of BBOB's influence towards the environment, as it is a part of raising people's awareness of the brand and highlights how they can contribute to the revolution [10]. People were taught to do whatever possible to recycle their packaging, like turning it into furniture or maybe even have fun by designing a 3D art. The Body Shop also shows what they have done to these recycled bottles physically, like turning the whole waste into one unique store, which portrayed what one can do to recycle materials [26]. To summarize, the online observation agrees with the previous study that shows how this program enhance and refines the brand's connection with its customers [24]. This was pursued by the awards, campaigns, and the BBOB program itself as it brings great publication and can be treated as advertisement to promote its brand image [13].

Interview

After conducting an interview with Dita Agustia, brand values manager of The Body Shop Indonesia, all of the interview questions were answered completely, presented in the following paragraph. Bring Back Our Bottles (BBOB) is a program of The Body Shop® Indonesia that invites consumers to return empty packaging of The Body Shop® products to nearby stores for recycling and the processing results are used for community empowerment. Through the BBOB program, we try to educate customers and the public to be responsible for plastic packaging products that are used daily so as to reduce waste generation in the surrounding environment or landfills - Tempat Pembuangan Akhir (TPA).

In 2008, The Body Shop Indonesia launched the authentic Bring Back Our Bottles program. This recycling scheme was started as our pure local initiative, where we ask our customer to bring back their bottles to nearest store. All of the returned bottles will be recycled by our waste management partner throughout Indonesia, and then turned into recycled goods and also in-store furniture's for our newest concept store, Changemaking Beauty Store. Customers also get rewarded by joining the Bring Back Our Bottles.

Every year, the beauty industry generates billions of pieces of packaging, most of which is plastic that ends up in landfills or in our oceans. And while more and more of us are trying hard to reduce our impact on the planet, we can't do it without brave, transformative acts from the businesses we love. That's where The Body Shop comes in with pure local initiatives on Bring Back Our Bottles Program. We hope, in turn, we can positively affect customer behaviour, encouraging responsible shopping and recycling habits and for environment we can reduce waste generation in the surrounding environment or landfills (TPA) also that ends up in our oceans As per 2022, we receive more than 10 mio empties from our customers. In collaboration with our impact partners, we turned those empties into recycled mural, in-store furniture, recycled goods for GWP, and many more.

The interview reached the conclusion that the Bring Back our Bottle (BBOB) Program's primary goal is to encourage customers to return their empty The Body Shop Indonesia's product packaging to the nearest stores in order to raise awareness of the environmental issue and cut down on the country's plastic waste production. The Body Shop Indonesia also included this program as a component of their community empowerment initiative. According to Daigo Makihara, "... it is an innovative approach to community development that seeks to optimize utilization of local resources and opportunities, without restriction to any specific sectors." [20, 28]

In addition, a program that was legitimately founded in 2008 was also created to increase Indonesia's recycling scheme. Under this program, received bottles were recycled into new recycled items, reducing the country's plastic waste production. Recycling, as we all know, is one way to lessen the quantity of plastic waste generated, but it also helps the business by cutting costs or "avoid expenditures." [1]. This suggests that the BBOB program has positively impacted the waste management system in the last 14 years through its pure local initiatives.

The BBOB program has rewarded customers for returning packaging waste and has encouraged them to do so. Lowering waste generation—the usual starting point for activity data used to estimate emissions from solid waste disposal surrounding the environment or landfills [25, 26]—ultimately had a positive influence on the environment. Given that the beauty industry produced enormous amounts of

plastic trash, including HDPE plastic account up to 70% of the industry's emissions [12], this program substantially decreased the amount of waste by shifting customer behaviours regarding their waste management. Overall, this study agrees with the previous research that the BBOB program considerably improves the relationship between a brand and its [24, 29], with additional information related to the environmental impact of the BBOB program itself. By urging customers to return the waste and collecting 10.975.167 empty bottles, it has reduced the amount of HDPE plastics in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

Plastic waste is a big problem the world is facing as it has contributed to many environmental problems. The beauty industry is one of the biggest consumers of plastic as most of their packaging relies on plastic. With this growing concern, companies try to be more aware and take responsibility regarding the environment. A significant example of the beauty industry taking initiative is The Body Shop's BBOB program. The BBOB program is a CSR program created by The Body Shop. The results gathered from both online observations and interviews displayed that the BBOB program encourages customers to return their empty packaging for the greater good. Moreover, this program educates its customers regarding plastic consumption, and the empty packaging will be recycled by The Body Shop's waste management partner. In return, customers will also get points for discounts and rewards for returning their empty packaging.

Through online observations, observations were made from its website and Instagram. The data from the website shows that 10 million plastics have been collected, equivalent to 175,342 tonnes on average. Moreover, The Body Shop has won awards regarding its BBOB program, thus making them well-known in the industry as they are up to date and aware of the latest issues, making them the trendsetter for other beauty brands in making programs similar to BBOB. As a part of BBOB, they also host workshops and campaigns regarding plastic waste. Additionally, they have successfully reused plastic to create a store, inspiring people to start collecting and recycle plastic.

Through the interview, our group was able to contact the brand value manager of The Body Shop, who specializes in corporate social responsibility. The data collected emphasizes how this program works, why was this program created, how this program influenced the environment and how this program can reduce plastic waste in Indonesia, especially HDPE plastics. Knowing that the beauty industry is the leading contributor in plastics, this program can reduce and change behaviours concerning their waste management. Thus, the BBOB program has successfully invites and educates customers to recycle plastic and shift their waste management behaviours, by successfully collecting a lot of plastic, raising awareness, hosting campaigns, and creating a store made up of plastic to inspire people to start recycling and re-examine their behaviour.

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