

Minimalist marketing as a turning point in marketing: benefits and challenges

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Abstract

Marketers have been struggling with the challenge of reducing the scope of people's participation and lack of attention towards marketing activities time to time. So that they can hardly establish effective communication with their audience and turn them into their customers. Surveys show that a possible solution to get out of this situation can be minimalism marketing. Therefore, in the current research, by addressing the marketing of minimalism as a new approach in marketing, the benefits and challenges of this style of marketing are identified. In this way, the relevant literature is reviewed and by conducting semi-structured interviews, the interview texts are analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method.

Keywords: minimalism, marketing, minimalism marketing, minimal philosophy, minimal lifestyle.

1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced and information-saturated world, the field of marketing communications faces a constant challenge to capture and retain the attention of audiences. Since people's attention spans decrease in the face of increasingly traditional marketing messages, an attractive solution could be to turn to marketing minimalism (Fraculj, Lekaj, & Kondić, 2023). The survey results and previous literature support in detail that minimalism gives consumers the view that a product is more natural, of higher quality, and overall they come to a more serious perception of the said brand (Guerrero, 2024). This is why minimalism is recognized as an obvious solution to many marketing problems and proves to be more of a natural tendency and desire in humans than an induced process (Frielinghaus, 2022).

During the last few decades, the increasing tendency of consumers towards consumption of minimalism, which is rooted in the philosophy of minimalism, is clearly seen. That is, a large number of consumers tend to experience a simple and less complicated life by choosing a minimal philosophy to focus more on the concept of happiness and quality life goals (Lee and Ahn 2016; Pangarkar, Shukla, and Taylor). (, 2021). Focusing on simplicity is especially important for minimalists who are less focused on materialism and instant gratification (Iyer and Muncy 2016). Interestingly, while minimalism has long been discussed as a widespread social trend, minimalism in consumption has accelerated significantly in the following decades (Taylor, C. R., 2024). Minimalism has become a popular style of consumption in recent years. Minimal consumers focus on simplicity by reducing consumption and limiting assets (Pangarkar et al., 2021).

It can be said that minimalist consumers' satisfaction with simple lifestyle is due to concern for society and environment. They choose products based on self-awareness and identity and personal values rather than induced fashion trends (Bardey et al., 2022).

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Consumers who live a minimal lifestyle tend to experience overconsumption. In the sense that they focus less on enjoying self-consumption and have a great desire to achieve a higher level of human motivation (Ganassali & Matysiewicz, 2021). Also, self-transcendence is the basis of positive characteristics such as social values, pro-environmentalism, support for animal rights, and similar behaviors, all of which are related to the minimalist lifestyle (Luchs and Mick, 2018). Consumers adopt this lifestyle because of the ethical nature of the minimal lifestyle (Wilson & Bellezza, 2022). Overall, the concept of minimalism is a lifestyle that is rooted in the belief that where having material things does not reduce stress and anxiety, by reducing financial obligations, it frees up time to pursue what is truly important. gives (Kotler et al., 2021).

Minimalism in marketing is based on the "less is more" approach, focusing on a smaller number of visual elements and short phrase structures (Fraculj, Lekaj, & Kondić, 2023). Minimal marketing is an approach in which unnecessary marketing practices are eliminated and Marketers focus on what is most important to marketing. Therefore, minimalist marketing should shape its content according to its customers in order to increase popularity according to this trend, this approach simplifies the steps of marketing activities and causes more efficiency. (Kumar, S., Kumar, S., Joshi, S., Avinash, 2018). Therefore, minimalism, by encouraging people to live with fewer possessions, is an emerging issue in marketing communication that appeals to sustainable consumption and waste reduction.

2. Theoretical background

The movement known as minimalism first appeared in the 1960s and had a significant impact on art and design (Margariti et al., 2017). The modernist movement of the mid-twentieth century, which sought to reject the elaborate and beautiful designs of the past in favor of a more practical and effective approach to design, is also associated with minimalism (Tungate, 2019). Minimalism, both as a philosophy and as a design concept, is timeless and classic, and it leads the thinking towards simplicity and compatibility, and attracts the attention of the consumer if the features of minimalism are applied (Odak, 2021).

Low-consumption lifestyles have become increasingly popular over the past decade. One of these lifestyles is minimalism, which is characterized by anti-consumerist attitudes and behaviors, including the conscious decision to live with fewer possessions (Dopierała, 2017). Minimalism is the process of eliminating unnecessary elements and focusing on what really matters. We need (Dev, N. E. R. E. J. 2020). Minimalism and its understanding of the elimination of various components creates a perspective that makes the concept of simplicity shine in various aspects. This refers to the use of fewer elements in achieving the desired result It has become one of the most common design trends in recent years (Gumber, S., 2023).

Minimalism can be described as a lifestyle that serves the goals of personal well-being and sustainable consumption (Kang et al., 2021) and is considered a precursor to happiness (Alexander and Ussher, 2012). Thus, minimalism is described as the use of "limited materials to create a desired effect" (VanEenoo, 2011, p.7) and refers to the quality of simplicity (Inbar et al., 2007). In this way, minimalism is a human-centered approach that tries to eliminate the undesirable signals of contemporary society (Botha, 2014; VanEenoo, 2011).

In general, the phenomenon of minimal consumption includes limiting possessions, reducing excessive consumption, consciously taking care of consumption, and improving personal quality of life by not wanting to be materialistic (Lee & Ahn, 2016; McGouran & Prothero, 2016). Accordingly, minimalism is a model that can be used to achieve the goal of well-being and happiness by embracing a simple and clean life (Peyer et al., 2017).

So far, research has concluded that minimal consumption brings a number of well-being benefits such as satisfaction, happiness, contentment, and improved social relationships (Meissner, 2019; Seegebarth, Peyer, Balderjahn, & Wiedmann, 2016). Minimalism suggests that if people dramatically reduce their material possessions and at the same time resist the accumulation of more material goods, they will not only practice sustainable consumption but also strengthen the production system through more prudent acquisition behavior. Lloyd and Pennington, 2020). These features refer to "less is more" (Odak, 2021). In this way, minimalism reflects a paradigm shift in consumer behavior that values the principle of sustainability (Kanget al., 2021). The important thing is that minimalism as a value is about reducing the amount of consumption. In fact, consumers

who identify themselves as minimalists prefer quality over quantity in purchases (Wilson & Bellezza, 2022). This preference is related to minimalism.

Some see minimalism as just a marketing ploy to increase sales (Meissner, 2019). Minimalist marketing beyond the traditional techniques represents a significant change in the marketing landscape to cover broader aspects of human interaction (Žunić, 2023). This approach is consistent with the minimalist movement seen in various fields and emphasizes simplicity, scarcity and visual harmony (Martin-Woodhead, 2023). In general, all generations have a positive attitude toward minimalism, but millennials stand out a bit compared to the other two groups. Respondents have used minimalism during decision making in the purchase process (Fraculj&Kondić, 2023).

Marketing minimalism is a strategy that focuses on simplifying marketing activities to create a more impactful and meaningful experience for consumers.

With an emphasis on simplicity, minimalist marketing is critical to future success and has benefits that include satisfying consumer preferences for simple approaches. On the other hand, challenges may include breaking away from complex traditional marketing strategies. The authors argue that simplicity is the key to future marketing success and reflects consumers' preference for simpler, less intrusive approaches to advertising and marketing, and the need It shows consumers to simpler approaches (Cristol & Sealey, 2001).

Research shows that simplification in marketing, based on innovative human decision-making approaches, brings benefits such as ease of choice, but may create challenges to stand out in a chaotic market. Since simplifying patterns and habits are observed in the daily routine, people use simple innovative methods to make decisions. Behavioral economics also highlights the power of simplicity. Therefore, marketers can benefit from innovative decision-making methods by simplifying them (Rubinson, J., 2009). Sani, & Shokooh (2016) in their research show that minimalist marketing, based on Gestalt principles, simplifies the user experience on commercial websites, increases effectiveness and reduces costs. At the same time, it may face the challenge of balancing simplicity with the effective transfer of necessary information. Therefore, minimalism in web design increases effective user experience and reduces confusion. In his research, Siyuan (2017) presents a minimalist shopping website interaction system that saves shopping time by quick selection based on quick information that avoids selection fatigue, applicable distinctive elements, and unnecessary purchases. In other words, it prevents malfunctions by preventing unnecessary purchases, improves the shopping experience, and provides an efficient shopping process by providing quick information for a quick choice (Siyuan, 2017). In an article entitled "A study of minimalist principles for designing entrepreneurs' website", the authors present principles that should be used as guidelines for the success of the minimalist approach (using fewer elements in presenting information) in entrepreneurs' websites. and emphasizes the improvement of entrepreneurs' websites for better use of business opportunities and the importance of Gestalt theories in the minimalist approach (Bakar et al., 2017).

Minimalism includes simple design formats, few elements and visual calmness. Minimalism is a dynamic movement in various fields. In this way, minimalist marketing also offers the advantages of simplicity and visual appeal, but may create challenges in communicating accurate information effectively (Margariti et al, 2017). A study has been conducted with the aim of designing the entrepreneur's website interface using minimalist principles in order to produce a minimalist entrepreneur's website. The implementation of minimalist principles in the design of the entrepreneur's website improves the user experience and increases the effective access to the website and thus provides a better interaction of the user interface. Expert reviews have identified seven minimalist website designs for further consideration (Zain et al, 2017). Margariti et al (2018) concluded in their research that minimalist marketing, characterized by white space (free of unnecessary elements) and unique interpretations, is a design It offers innovation, but at the same time, it may not be the only solution available. In other words, minimalism in design activates unique interpretations in the contemporary era. Research findings titled "Minimalism in consumption" with an emphasis on responsible decision-making in consumption show minimalism in consumption as a growing trend and shape contemporary consumption based on social, cultural and economic factors. Also, minimalist marketing, similar to consumption minimalism, emphasizes rational decision-making and limited consumption. Consistency in consumption is one of the advantages of this marketing style, the challenges ahead may include adapting to changing consumer preferences (Błoński & Witek, 2019).

In another research, by introducing the concept of minimalist luxury, the theoretical approach about luxury goods and wealth, the study and balance of minimalist luxury and managerial implications were investigated. The findings show that the rich may use minimalist luxury goods to display themselves. In other words, minimalist luxury in marketing can distinguish the rich and provide a unique approach for this category of consumers (Liu, Z. J., Yildirim, P., & Zhang, J., 2020). In a study, (Skivko, M., Korneeva, E., & Kolmykova, M., 2020) defined digital minimalism in business and personal communication as the dissemination of digital etiquette, specific behavior patterns in the media environment, as well as new digital terms. which generally determines the perspective of media consumption regulation and further development of digital culture. Their findings suggest that live communication is more valuable as social capital than digital relationships.

Research findings entitled "Towards a theory of minimalism and well-being" examined the experiences of people who live a minimalist lifestyle and found that minimalism provides various well-being benefits including independence, competence, mental space, awareness and positive emotions. Therefore, minimalism has various benefits for well-being. This study requires people to identify themselves as minimalists (Lloyd, K., & Pennington, W., 2020). In an article entitled "The Impact of minimalism on product design", the authors, emphasizing minimalism as a popular modern design style, examined the application of minimalism in product design and the reasons for its transformation from a "brand less" brand to a "brand". "branded" were analyzed. The findings indicated that minimalism in product design can increase performance and practicality (Yao Li&Huang, 2022). Minimalist marketing challenges traditional techniques by focusing on essential aspects, offering simplicity, originality and reducing clutter. Its benefits include connecting more customers with simple marketing communication strategies. With the idea that marketing has expanded beyond traditional techniques. Therefore, consumerism and minimalism have joined together in modern marketing strategies (Kashyap, 2023).

3. Methodology

The current research is a qualitative research. In order to collect research data, first the relevant literature was reviewed and then exploratory interviews were conducted to complete the data. The target community of the research are scientific and practical experts familiar with marketing who at the same time have a desire to participate. To determine the required number of participants, the rule of theoretical saturation was followed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:63). To achieve the accuracy and reliability of the data obtained from the interviews, the Lincoln and Guba (1985) evaluation method was used, which is equivalent to validity and reliability in quantitative research. and transferability was investigated. In order to validate the interview, the member survey technique was used. Therefore, during the interview, we tried to ensure whether the participants agree with the researcher's perception of all the words they said. and if they have a supplementary opinion, announce it; This was actually a validation of the interview process. Also, by spending enough time to conduct interviews, the reliability of the research data was increased to an acceptable level. To estimate the verifiability, the process of conducting the interview was confirmed by several experts; In order to ensure the uniformity of coding by the researchers, two other coders were also used for several interview samples. To create reliability, the data obtained from the interview was documented. This work was done by writing domain notes and reminders during the interview, recording and recording all the details of the interviews and taking notes in all stages of the interview. In order to ensure the transferability of the research findings, it was also tried to provide sufficient information to the readers of the research by mentioning the details of the actions taken in the process of conducting the interview in order to provide a basis for judging the applicability of the findings in other research environments. The purpose of theme/theme analysis is to identify themes within the text. In this approach, the focus is on the content of the interviews and "what" is expressed. The analytical strategy considered in this research, based on the main question and by relying on textual data, is the analysis of the theme or theme, in which the focus is not on the "way of expression" or the "purpose of saying" but on the verbal content that is said (Reissman, 2008).

4. Findings

The findings from the literature as well as the interviews after analysis and classification are presented in the form of Table No. 1

Table 1. Research findings: dimensions of the index

Source	Index	Dimension	
Liu, Z. J., Yildirim, P., & Zhang, J. (2020)	A minimalist luxury spread	Branding	Advantages
Yao Li & Huang, (2022).	Changing the product from an "unbranded" to a "branded"		
Favier, Celhay & Pantin-Sohier, (2019)	Distinct brand signals		
Iancu & Iancu, (2017).	Logo design		
(Druică et al., 2023; Kang et al., (2021)	Brand value		
Favier, Celhay & Pantin-Sohier, (2019)	Distinct brand signals		
Siyuan, (2017)	Prevent choice fatigue	Efficiency and effectiveness	
Siyuan, (2017)	Avoid unnecessary purchases		
Siyuan, (2017)	Quick selection and saving time		
Rubinson, J. (2009)	Ease of choice and simplification of decision making		
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Disambiguation and simplicity		
Sani, S. M., & Shokooh, Y. K. (2016)	Increasing effectiveness and reducing costs		
Cristol, S. M., & Sealey, P. (2001)	Simple and less annoying advertising	Effective marketing communications	
Fraculj, M., Lekaj, L., & Kondić, L. (2023)	More awareness of advertising, unique or multiple messages		
Pracejus et al., 2012; Stockl, 2009; Thorlacius, (2007)			
Kumar et al., (2018)			
Chen, S., Ponomarenko, V., Xiao, T., Lv, L., & Liu, G. (2024)	Persuasive advertising		
Jackson et al., 1994; Wren and Reynolds, (2004)	Clear and modest design in advertising		
Stockl, (2009)	Reduce textual content		
Hutton and Nolte, 2011; Lee and Lee, (2004)			
Margariti, K., Boutsouki, C., & Hatzithomas, L. (2018)	Activation of unique interpretations of designs (activation of unique interpretations)		
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Purposeful limiting of consumption and responsible decision making	Consumer buying behavior	
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Buy durable items		
Martin-Woodhead, A. (2023)	Sustainable practices through reduced consumption and product reuse		
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Sustainable consumption		
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Consumption based on individual characteristics		
Wilson & Bellezza, (2022)	Prefer quality over quantity in shopping		

Source	Index	Dimension
Dopierała, (2017)	Avoid buying cheap and low-quality goods and repair items if possible	
Lloyd and Pennington, (2020) Kanget al., (2021)	The value of the principle of sustainability	
Iyer & Muncy (2009)	Conscious reduction of consumption for the general benefit of society	
Lloyd, K., & Pennington, W. (2020) Meissner, 2019: Seegebarth, Peyer, Balderjahn, & Wiedmann, (2016)	Welfare benefits including happiness, satisfaction and improved social relationships	Psychological implications
Lloyd, K., & Pennington, W. (2020)	Reduce stress and anxiety	
Lloyd, K., & Pennington, W. (2020)	Independence, competence, mental space, awareness and positive emotions	
Sani, S. M., & Shokooh, Y. K. (2016) Jackson et al., 1994; Wren and Reynolds, (2004)	Increasing user experience and reducing confusion in web design,	Customer experience
Sani, S. M., & Shokooh, Y. K. (2016)	Limit potential distractions	
Zain, S. Z. M., Bakar, Z. A., & Noor, N. M. M. (2017)	Improving user experience and accessibility in business websites, web design and user interface	
Margariti, K., Boutsouki, C., Hatzithomas, L., & Zotos, Y. (2017) Stevanovich, (2013)	Improving user experience and increasing website accessibility for better engagement	
Kashyap, (2023)	Simplicity, charm and visual comfort	
Fraculj, M., Lekaj, L., & Kondić, L. (2023)	Focusing on essential aspects, providing simplicity, originality and reducing clutter	
Chou, (2011) Inbar et al., (2007) Favier, Celhay & Pantin-Sohier, (2019)	Reduce or eliminate clutter	
Guerrero, (2024)	Simplicity in product design, packaging	
Sani, S. M., & Shokooh, Y. K. (2016) Margariti, K., Boutsouki, C., Hatzithomas, L., & Zotos, Y. (2017)	A balance between simplicity and effective transmission of necessary information	Transferring message Challenges
Gumber, S. (2023)	Communicate accurate information effectively	
Rubinson, J. (2009)	Necessity of complexity for effective message transmission	Coherent program
Interview	Invisibility in a turbulent market	

Source	Index	Dimension
Interview	Neglecting the audience's reaction to changes	
Błoński, K., & Witek, J. (2019)	Removal of distinguishing features from the main competitors	
Gumber, S. (2023)	Adapting to changing consumption preferences	Brand engagement
interview	No excitement or charm	

5. Discussion and conclusion

Minimalism in marketing communication refers to the practice of using a simple and straightforward approach to convey a message to a target audience. This approach involves only using essential elements such as images, text and design to create a clear and concise message. The goal of minimalism is to convey the message effectively without any unnecessary distractions or clutter (Fraculj, Lekaj, & Kondić, 2023).

Researchers investigating logo design emphasize the importance of simplicity and minimalism in achieving a greater level of recall and recognition (Pimentel & Heckler, from Iancu & Iancu, 2017). The literature suggests that simple items are easier to remember because they require less processing power and less attention. A logo should be related to identity, meaning, liking and familiarity and have a natural and harmonious design (Van Grinsven & Das, 2014).

(Stockl, 2009) suggests that a minimalist advertisement focuses on reducing textual and visual content to a few signs (semiotic minimalist advertising), because the more information in the advertisement, the lower its quality is considered (Hutton and Nolte, 2011). On the other hand, the interviewees consider the elimination of the main elements that are differentiating and connected to the brand identity as well as the emotional value of that element to be the challenge of minimalism in marketing. Therefore, according to research results, minimalism used in logo design does not always have a positive effect on brand perception and image.

The growing influence of minimalism on branding and marketing communications (e.g., advertising, brand statements) is due to the association of minimalism with environmental sustainability (Druică et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2021), a value that many brands are committed to and looking for it.

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