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EXPERIENCE, ENGAGEMENT AND TRUST EFFECTS TOWARDS BRANDLOYALTY

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Abstract

This research adds to the existing correlation by elucidating and substantiating the impact of brand trust on brand loyalty and examining the relationship between brand experience factors towards customer engagement on brand loyalty. Data were gathered via online surveys and a descriptive quantitative design from respondents who had previously purchased fashion brands. To verify the hypotheses, a structured modeling technique was employed. The findings showed a wide range of substantial positive connections between brand experience on consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Brand trust is also influenced by brand loyalty. It is anticipated that it would give management vital data and practical insights into consumers' purchase behavior, which will help clothing companies sustain.

Keywords: Customer Engagement, Brand Experience, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menambah korelasi yang sudah ada dengan menjelaskan dan membuktikan dampak kepercayaan merek pada loyalitas merek dan menguji hubungan antara faktor pengalaman merek terhadap keterlibatan pelanggan pada loyalitas merek. Data dikumpulkan melalui survey online dan desain kuantitatif deskriptif dari responden yang sebelumnya pernah membeli merek fashion. Untuk memverifikasi hipotesis, teknik pemodelan terstruktur digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil temuan menunjukkan berbagai hubungan positif yang substansial antara pengalaman merek pada keterlibatan konsumen dan loyalitas merek. Kepercayaan merek juga dipengaruhi oleh loyalitas merek. Hal ini diantisipasi akan memberikan manajemen berupa data yang vital dan wawasan praktis ke dalam perilaku pembelian konsumen, yang akan membantu perusahaan pakaian tetap bertahan.

Kata Kunci : *Keterlibatan Pelanggan, Pengalaman Merek, Kepercayaan Merek, Loyalitas Merek*

INTRODUCTION

Apparel industry is one of the important industries in Indonesia. According to CNBC Indonesia (2019), the apparel industry contributes 18,01% or 116 trillion rupiah to the economy, while in 2022 apparel industry revenue is projected to reach 173 trillion rupiah (Statista, 2022). Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) reported that the export value of the Indonesian apparelindustry reached 114 million rupiah from January to November 2021. This figure grew by 19.59% compared to the same period from the previous year (Statista, 2022). Despite the increasing trend of the Indonesian apparel industry, multinational apparel companies still sustain from the pandemic. This may cause companies to differentiate their products from their competitors by giving a better customer experience. It becomes a dominant factor because it helps differentiate apparel brands and create brand loyalty. (Andreini et al., 2018). Thus, to retain customers, apparel brands need to adapt customer experience and engagement to build brand loyalty.

Moreover, communication methods that are always changing and developing have changed the attribute and feature of customer brand engagement, especially in targeting potential consumers (Calder et al., 2018). Therefore, engaging customers continually is an important and crucial matter for apparel brands to build brand loyalty. To maintain customers in this fierce industry, a company should put more effort in the brand experience and customer engagement improvement to create brand trust in order to stimulate brand loyalty, which will build strengthened relationships with customers and ensure survival in the marketplace (Chinomona, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand experience refers to subjective consumer responses that are caused by specific brand attributes, there are four aspects of brand experience which are sensory brand, affective brand, intellectual brand, and behavioral brand (Brakus et al.,2009). Marketers need to acknowledge how customers experience brands because each customers experience brands differently and also how brand experience affects marketing strategies, because when a customer buys a product or service they are not just looking for the product's functional benefits (Jung & Soo, 2012). According to Morrison & Crane (2007), emotion-rich experience can create benefits such as brand differentiation, customer loyalty, increasing sales and promotion of the brands. Product experience can happen when there is physical contact with the product and indirectly such as when the product is showed virtually or when the product appears in an advertisement (Hoch & Ha, 1986).

McAllister and Pessemier (1982) stated that sensory stimulation is important and a brand becomes more valuable when they realize the sensory stimulations.Sensoryaspects are determined by visual and brand features that affect the consumer's sensory body (Hwang & Hyun, 2012). According to Hulten (2011), consumer sensorial experiences are affected by the aesthetic designs of the brand,

such as materials, color, and style; it is also affected by brand themes such as slogans.

The affective brand aspect consisted of subjective consumer experiences such as consumer emotions and sentiments toward the brand (Hwang & Hyun, 2012). A brand can be perceived positively (happy or negative), but it can be different for each consumer (Kang et al., 2017). It is important that a brand can evoke positive feelings because it affects consumers' decision- making process.

Intellectual experiences are events that prompt consumers' curiosity and thoughts (Schmitt, 1999). Intellectual experience is identified when consumers' thoughts toward a brand, a brand should be able to convince and influence good memories of the consumers. (Kang et al.,2017).

Behavioral brand aspects indicate behavioral reactions to a brand, provoked by a particular brand stimulus (Wang, 2014). For example, a consumer that enjoys the physical benefits of a brand will increase the chance of purchasing a package of products (Tsaur, 2007).

Customer Engagement is indicated by customer behaviors exceeding transactions and can be defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations where they focus on a brand and resulting from motivational drivers (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Customer engagement with a brand is the customer's brend-related state described by distinct levels of affective, cognitive, and behavioral activities (Hollebeek et al., 2019.)

Brand Trust is when a customer feels secure when interacting with a brand because they believe that the brand is reliable and that their interest and needs can be fulfilled (Delgado et al., 2003). According to Mabkhot et al. (2017), customers who rely on a brand will stay loyal to that brand, pay a premium price, and share information about their tastes. Brand trust is important, so a business needs to ensure that its products always have the same performance and value.

Brand Loyalty is a crucial idea, mainly when situations threaten the relationship between the two players (Guillard & Roux, 2014; Kwang-Ho & Kim, 2011). These two role-players are referred to as customers and brands in the marketing literature (Bahri-Ammari et al., 2016). Despite the possibility of situational effects and marketing attempts to promote switching, Oliver (1999) defines brand loyalty as a firmly held commitment to re-patronize or buy a brand regularly in the future (Lam & Shankar, 2014). Indeed, according to Oliver (1999), the phase process develops an individual's allegiance to any consuming object. According to Aaker (1991), there are five degrees to a consumer's relationship with a brand, with brand loyalty being the last and most decisive (Fetscherin et al., 2014).

Brand Experience that causes customers enthusiasm and enjoyment will create consumers' repeated purchases, resulting in brand loyalty (Ong et al., 2018). In this study, brand loyalty is the most significant level of the consumer-brand relationship. Brand loyalty is measured using a mixed methodology that includes brand trust and customer engagement, consisting of sensory brand experience, affective brand experience, behavioral brand

experience, and intellectual brandexperience.

Research on the apparel industry is widely conducted, and few studies have examined the effects of sensory brand experience, affective brand experience, behavioral brand experience, intellectual brand experience through customer engagement, and brand trust on brand loyalty within the industry. Therefore, there has not been much attention given to the relationship between brand experience through customer engagement and brand trust in brand loyalty, specifically on the determinant of brand experience in theapparel industry.

Research Hypothesis and Research Model

1. **Sensory Brand Experience and Engagement**

   Sensory brand experience happens when a customer's perception thatrelate to a certain brand affect the consumer's mind and senses (Berry and Carbone, 2007).For example, the consumers feel good and comfortable when they try and wear the apparel, seeing a store that is minimalist and clean gives a perception of modern and sleek, the good smell of the stores; consumer different types of sensory can be caused by the brand. When consumers see appealing visual impressions and have a pleasing sensory experience, it has a higher chance they will engage with a brand (Ahn and Back, 2018). The hypothesis proposed as follow:

   H1a: Sensory brand experience is positively related to customer engagement.

2. **Affective Brand Experience and Engagement**

   Affective brand experience are customers' feelings resulting from brand engagement, and a good affective experience can create consumers emotional attachment towards a brand (Ahn and Back, 2018). The hypothesis is:

   H1b: Affective brand experience is positively related to customer engagement.

3. **Behavioral Brand Experience and Engagement**

   Behavioral brand experience is when the brand triggers the physical activities of consumers (Calder et al, 2018). For instance, when consumers walk into a store and have a good behavioral experience that is fun and exciting; the consumers will want to engage more with the brand. The following hypothesis is:

   H1c: Behavioral brand experience is positively related to customer engagement.

4. **Intellectual Brand Experience and Engagement**

   A brand functional attribute will result in consumer thinking process, which will increase brand engagement (Ahn and Back, 2018). For instance, when a consumer attends a fashion show and sees what they like, it will create curiosity such as whether the apparel is suitable for the special occasions they will attend. The proposed hypothesis as follow

   H1d: Intellectual brand experience is positively related to customerengagement.

5. **Customer Engagement and Brand Loyalty**

   According to Verhoef et al (2010), when a consumer engages with a brand, this can create an emotional engagement

that will result in brand loyalty. Nowadays to engage with a consumer is much easier by using social media, website,email. Hence,the proposed hypothesis as follow:

H2: Customer engagement has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

6. Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

When a brand keeps their product value and superior product quality consistently, it will develop brand trust (Bennur & Jin, 2017). Brand trust is essential to gain a loyal customer base (Huang, 2017). Forinstance, when a brand is honest, reliable and sincere in addressing their concerns and issues; it can make a consumer trust a brand. Therefore, the hypothesis as follow:

H3: Brand trust has a positive influence on brand loyalty.

The research model can be seen in Figure 1.

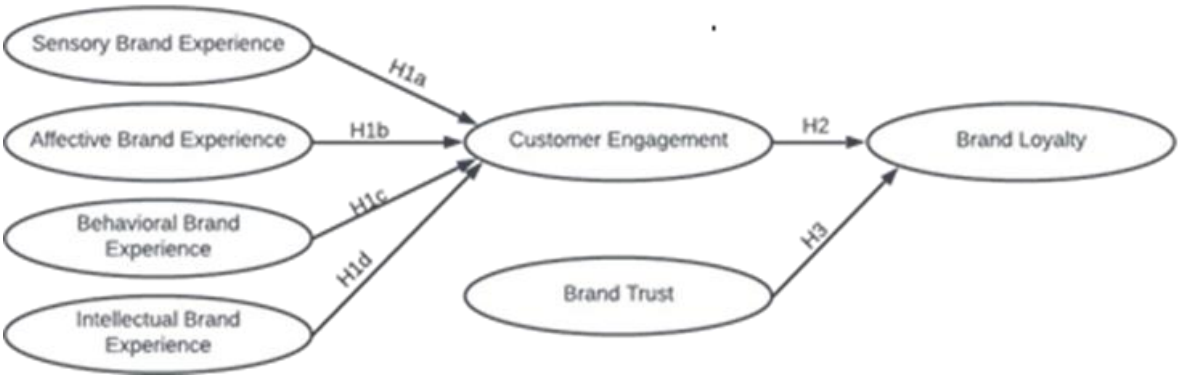

Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study collected data by distributing online questionnaires. A questionnaire is a tool for gathering information that asks respondents a series of questions. Closed questions are given to respondents in this study. Closed questions are those for which a substitute response is already available (Apuke, 2017). Theresponses that respondents deem to be most pertinent to their choice can be filled in. Online survey distribution was done with Google Forms.

There were 257 respondents that filled the online surveys with the demographic data attached in Table 1. The 257 respondents were filtered and targeted customers who had already bought apparel products with the scope of research in the apparel brand in Indonesia. Through referring data from earlier studies, we use 29variables in this study (Khan et al., 2020; Ledikwe; 2020). A Likert scale with seven points—seven for "strongly agree" and one for "strongly disagree"—is used in thesurvey.

This research used descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). To confirm data validity and reliability, this study used Average Variance Extracted and Cronbach's Alpha. To check the discriminant validity using Fornell-

Lacker Criterion. To do this research, we used SmartPLS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent profiles

Among 257 respondents, the majority of respondents are 26-30 years old (37%) and they have bachelor degrees (53%). The most common form of occupation is private-employee (41%) and 46 percent of the respondents spend 0-1 million (IDR) for apparel each month.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative
Age Group			
18-25 years	48	19%	19%
26-30 years	94	37%	55%
31-35 years	63	25%	80%
36-40 years	30	12%	91%
>41 years	22	9%	100%
Education			
SD	0	0%	0%
SMP	0	0%	0%
SMA	36	14%	14%
Bachelor	136	53%	67%
Magister	85	33%	100%
Occupation			
Entrepreneur	36	14%	14%
Private-employee	105	41%	55%
State-employee	66	26%	81%
Student	35	14%	94%
Not working	15	6%	100%
Spending cost for apparel each month (IDR)			
0-1 million	118	46%	46%
1-2,5 million	65	25%	71%
2,5-5 million	29	11%	82%
5-7,5 million	15	6%	88%
7,5-10 million	25	10%	98%
>10 million	5	2%	100%

Source : data processed by the author

Reliability and Validity Measurement

Based on the value of each construct's loading factor, the PLS method demands that the Outer Model adhere to the concepts of validity and reliability. If the outer model can specify the relationship between potential variables and theirindicators, it can be classified as valid.

To confirm data validity, this study used Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with the criteria above 0.5 (Hair et.al, 2017), all variable AVE results above 0.5 with the average of 0.567; it shows an acceptable level of validity. As for measuring data reliability, we used Cronbach's Alpha with the required value being higher than 0.6. If the Cronbach's alpha value is higher than 0.6, then it shows good internal consistency reliability (Malhotra et al., 2007). The reliability and validity are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Affective BE	**0.605**	0.618	0.791	**0.558**
Behavioral BE	**0.703**	0.704	0.835	**0.627**
Brand Loyalty	**0.613**	0.613	0.795	**0.563**
Brand Trust	**0.724**	0.728	0.828	**0.546**
Customer Engagement	**0.888**	0.892	0.909	**0.501**
Intellectual BE	**0.628**	0.628	0.802	**0.574**
Sensory BE	**0.665**	0.675	0.817	**0.598**

Source : data processed by the author

Discriminant Validity

The cross loading between both the indicators as well as their constructs illustrates discriminant validity testing, particularly reflective indicators. When compared to the loading factors for otherconstructs, an indicator can be deemed valid when it has the highest factor loadings for the intended construct. Latent constructs are therefore better at predicting indicators in their block than indicators in all other blocks. To determine the correlation between variables, the indicators for the outer loadings above 0.7 were acceptable (Hair et al, 2017). Table 3 shows the cross loadings, with three variables below 0.7 (Customer Experience 5, 6, and 7).

From Table 3, it can be seen that the correlation of the affective brand experience construct with its indicators (ABE1 is 0.723, ABE2 is 0.708, and ABE3 is 0.806) which is larger than the correlation of competency indicators with other constructs, then the correlation of behavioral brand experience constructs with the indicators (BBE1 is 0.779, BBE2 is 0.803, and BBE3 is 0.794) is larger than the correlation of the behavioral brand experience indicator with other constructs. Other than that, the correlation of the brand loyalty construct with the indicator (BL1 is 0.749, BL2 of 0.752, and BL3 of 0.751) is larger than the correlation of brand loyalty indicators with other constructs, then the correlation of the brand trust construct with its indicators (BT1 is 0.773, BT2 is 0.737, and BT3 is 0.717) is larger than the correlation of brand trust indicators with other constructs, as well as the correlation of customer experience constructs with the indicators (CE1 is 0.750, CE10 is 0.702, CE2 is larger than the correlation of the customer experience indicator with other constructs. The last two construct, intellectual brand experience construct with its indicators (IBE1 is 0.739, IBE2 is 0.785, and IBE3 is 0.747) and sensory brand experience construct with its indicators (SB1 is 0.730, SB2 is 0.814, and SB3 is 0.774) are larger than the level indicator with other constructs.

Examining the value of the Fornell-Lacker Criterion is another way to check the discriminant validity of a test. The numbers is 0.766, CE3 is 0.775, CE4 is 0.705, CE8 is 0.746, and CE9 is 0.713) is larger than the correlation of the customer experience indicator with other constructs.

For each construct are higher than the correlation between them in the model,

according to Tables 4's results. Therefore, it can be said that the estimated model's construct satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity.

Table 3. Cross Loadings

	Affective BE	Behavioral BE	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust	Customer Engagement	Intellectual BE	Sensory BE
ABE1	**0.723**	0.319	0.273	0.299	0.319	0.209	0.270
ABE2	**0.708**	0.290	0.263	0.303	0.319	0.238	0.236
ABE3	**0.806**	0.279	0.235	0.216	0.403	0.299	0.261
BBE1	0.437	**0.779**	0.358	0.289	0.489	0.263	0.292
BBE2	0.251	**0.803**	0.307	0.277	0.523	0.279	0.162
BBE3	0.252	**0.794**	0.350	0.286	0.502	0.342	0.235
BL1	0.229	0.278	**0.749**	0.384	0.322	0.225	0.149
BL2	0.276	0.290	**0.752**	0.363	0.347	0.293	0.187
BL3	0.262	0.398	**0.751**	0.309	0.359	0.231	0.295
BT1	0.334	0.258	0.391	**0.773**	0.342	0.272	0.182
BT2	0.220	0.298	0.302	**0.737**	0.307	0.222	0.144
BT3	0.246	0.264	0.352	**0.717**	0.97	0.311	0.164
BT4	0.244	0.245	0.334	**0.729**	0.337	0.319	0.250
CE1	0.354	0.522	0.296	0.392	**0.750**	0.523	0.295
CE10	0.362	0.482	0.279	0.261	**0.702**	0.473	0.312
CE2	0.317	0.470	0.349	0.400	**0.766**	0.525	0.338
CE3	0.314	0.474	0.365	0.427	**0.775**	0.505	0.312
CE4	0.259	0.435	0.343	0.260	**0.705**	0.442	0.368
CE5	0.356	0.427	0.333	0.321	**0.646**	0.352	0.253
CE6	0.259	0.388	0.321	0.309	**0.620**	0.398	0.356
CE7	0.390	0.351	0.252	0.306	**0.632**	0.413	0.270
CE8	0.363	0.473	0.377	0.347	**0.746**	0.536	0.345
CE9	0.351	0.469	0.303	0.284	**0.713**	0.496	0.288
IBE1	0.305	0.279	0.225	0.292	0.495	**0.739**	0.271
IBE2	0.233	0.293	0.281	0.293	0.496	**0.785**	0.272
IBE3	0.227	0.273	0.251	0.282	0.515	**0.747**	0.337
SB1	0.281	0.160	0.199	0.214	0.298	0.335	**0.730**
SB2	0.265	0.253	0.172	0.217	0.380	0.279	**0.814**
SB3	0.250	0.247	0.277	0.154	0.344	0.296	**0.774**

Source : data processed by the author

Table 4. Fomell Lacker Criterion

	Affective BE	Behavioral BE	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust	Customer Engagement	Intellectual BE	Sensory BE
Affective BE	**0.747**						
Behavioral BE	0.393	**0.792**					
Brand Loyalty	0.340	0.427	**0.751**				
Brand Trust	0.358	0.358	0.470	**0.739**			
Customer Engagement	0.468	0.637	0.456	0.469	**0.708**		
Intellectual BE	0.336	0.372	0.334	0.382	0.663	**0.758**	
Sensory BE	0.341	0.288	0.278	0.251	0.443	0.388	**0.773**

Source : data processed by the author

Hypothesis Testing

The t-value of the data processing results is compared to the t-table value, that is a vital value for rejection of the null hypothesis, to perform hypothesis testing (H0). The bootsrap method combined with smartPLS is used to determine the t-value. The path relationship's estimated value inthe structural model needs to be significant. By using the boostrapping procedure, the significance value for this hypothesis can be determined. examining the T-statistical significance value and the parameter coefficient values in the algorithm boostrapping report to determine the significance of the hypothesis. Table 5 shows the sample mean, standard deviation, and p-value, that is less than 0.05, which means it is statistically significant.

Table 5. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (IO/STDEVI)	P Values
Affective BE > Customer Engagement	0.129	0.129	0.048	2.60	0.008
Behavioral BE > Customer Engagement	0.393	0.391	0.045	8.672	0.000
Brand Trust > Brand Loyalty	0.328	0.336	0.060	5.489	0.000
Customer Engagement > Brand Loyalty	0.302	0.297	0.058	5.169	0.000
Intellectual BE > Customer Engagement	0.427	0.431	0.045	9.508	0.000
Sensory BE > Customer Engagement	0.120	0.123	0.039	3.108	0.002

Source : data processed by the author

Discussion

Theoretical Contribution

This finding suggests that brand experiences on the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual levels all have an impact on consumer engagement. As a result, brand loyalty is positively correlated with both customer engagement and brand trust. The current study adds to the body of knowledge on loyalty theory in a number of ways. It first presents a paradigm that broadens the definitions of engagement and loyalty as they relate to millennial customer behavior. This study answers to a need for a better understanding of the connection between brand trust (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2018) and consumer experience and engagement (Khan et al., 2020). Theresults, in particular, corroborate the positive direct impacts of consumer involvement on brand loyalty and the large but varying effects of brand experience aspects on consumers' engagement (Khan et al., 2020). We also affirm the robust correlation between brand trust and consumer loyalty (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2018).

Managerial Implications

In addition to the previously mentioned findings, this study also has practical implications for marketers in building a strong, positive, and engaging brand experience, since there is a positiverelationship between sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual brand

experience dimensions on customers' engagement which then brand loyalty, and brand trust on brand loyalty. The relationship between brands and consumers also needs to be strengthened, more specifically for those brands seeking to create emotional bonds with consumers.

This study demonstrates that in order to build brand loyalty among consumers, a company must offer them a distinctive and different experience. To interact with customers better than other brands, managers must also study consumer psychology and behavior. Besides, a manager must create memorable customer encounters that produce good brand perception.

Aside from brand experience, managers also need to maintain brand trust to cultivate consumers' brand loyalty. Managers need to deliver good service and product quality consistently, and they also need to address consumers' concerns and problems about the product. Managers who solve consumer concerns increase brand trust, resulting in brand loyalty.

Research Limitations

The information provided by respondents cannot be generalized to the entire population in Indonesia because most of the respondents resided in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta. Future studies can beextended to other areas in Indonesia. Second limitation is that this research only focuses on the apparel industry; future research can focus on similar product industries such as textile. Other than that, it also does not include other variables such as brand love, brand attachment, brand commitment, and brand image. Therefore, the following research can focus on how other aspects willaffect brand loyalty.

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