Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty : A Case of Smartphone Brand in Indonesia

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***Abstract*** *: This study aims to investigate the effects of brand experience, brand commitment, and brand trust on brand loyalty of smartphone brands in Indonesia. The study was conducted using an online survey. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used as the analysis method for testing the hypotheses. The data analysis results indicated that brand experience significantly influenced brand commitment, brand trust and brand loyalty. The study also shows brand commitment has significant influence on brand loyalty. However, the results showed that brand trust has no significant influence on brand loyalty. Marketing managers can benefit from the findings of this study by understanding the dynamics of how brand experience, brand commitment, and brand trust build brand loyalty.*

***Keywords*** *:* Brand Experience, Brand Commitment, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty

# Introduction

Over the last decade, brand loyalty research has become a major topic in marketing and consumer research. With the proliferation of the competing brands in the market, keeping consumers loyal is an imperative for marketing managers. Achieving customer loyalty is a central goal for most firms due to its contribution to their profitability and long-term survival. Loyal customers engage more in positive word-of-mouth communication, are less price sensitive and resist competitive offers. Many studies had been focused on brand commitment, and brand trust factor as a determinate factor of loyalty.

Although brand trust and brand commitment are very important constructs for brand experience and loyalty in the relational context. Brand experiences result from stimulations and lead to pleasurable outcomes, and consumers want to repeat these experiences. That is, brand experience should affect not only past-directed commitment judgments but also future directed consumer loyalty. Consumers should be more likely to buy a brand again and recommend it to others and less likely to buy an alternate brand. The main aim of the present study was to test a general framework for building a consumer- brand relationship from an experiential view. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the effects of brand experience, brand commitment, and brand trust on brand loyalty. To achieve the objective, this study uses smartphone users in Indonesia as the research context. In Indonesia, smartphones have overwhelmed the market. According to Central Agency on Statistics, the total number of smartphone users in Indonesia are 341,28 million users in year 2019 and 355,62 million users in year 2020. The market growth is 6,84% in year 2019 and 4,20% in year 2020. Given that smartphones have potential growth in Indonesia and brands are a crucial factor in smartphone marketing, the research context is appropriate. The results of this study may provide strategic suggestions for smartphone marketing.

# Literature Review

**Brand Experience and Brand Commitment**

Brand experience is defined as the “subjective internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design, and identity, packaging, communications, and environments” (Schmitt et al., 2009). As such, the multidimensional construct of brand experience consists of four dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural).

(Moorman et al., 1992) defined commitment as a desire to maintain a relationship. (Fournier, 1998) defined brand commitment as an emotional or psychological attachment to a brand within a product class. Brand commitment can be viewed as an enduring desire to maintain a value of relationship to the brand (R. M. Morgan & S. D. Hunt, 1994).

(Şahin et al., 2012) and (Johnson et al., 2006) in their empirical work find significant effects of brand experience on brand commitment. Consumers having strong levels of commitment, who have nurtured strong relationships with their brand, tend to see strong connections between themselves and the brand (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Brand Experience has a positive influence on Brand Commitment

# Brand Experience and Brand Trust

(Keng et al., 2013) explained that a greater Brand Experience is not only associated with familiarity, but also critically influences understanding, the process of enjoying, enhancing, and developing a brand. In the process of consuming a brand, a consumer feels a pleasant experience, then this can help build consumer confidence to continue using the brand in the future. This explanation is in line with the statement that brand trust is the willingness of customers to trust the brand with all the risks where the hope of the brand can provide positive benefits for customers (Ahmed et al., 2014). Previous research has stated that Brand Experience is proven to have a significant effect on Brand Trust (Chinomona, 2013), (Yohanes Surya, 2014). Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2. Brand Experience has a positive influence on Brand Trust

# Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty

Brand experience is consumers' felt with a brand. Brand experience refers to consumers' purchase and consumption experiences with the brand and the organization, as well as to the brand influence on non-consumers (Khan & Rahman, 2015). A positive brand experience can be influenced by the overall product, shopping and consumption experience encountered by the consumers, thus resulting in brand satisfaction and loyalty (Schmitt et al., 2009). Customers' brand experience gains through consumption will possibly be stronger and last longer (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Customers today not only seek the tangible benefits provided by the brand organization but also the experience associated with the brand (Ong Chuan Huat et al., 2018).

Brand loyalty represents a customer’s positive attitude towards a brand or offering, in addition to repeat buying behaviour (Liu et al., 2012), (Rather et al., 2018). Based on this viewpoint, brand loyalty signifies the consequence of relationship between customer attitude in buying behaviour and brand. Loyal customers have a strong commitment to a brand, because they believe that brand is more satisfactory than the alternatives (Holland & Baker, 2001). Brand Loyalty is crucial for brand managers, because it provides continuous profit, decreased operating and marketing costs, increased customer revenue and price premiums, more referred new customers and competitive advantage (Tepeci, 1999).

Brand experience conceptualization and scale development are very important for understanding and managing brand trust and loyalty concepts (Schmitt et al., 2009). In

addition, brand experience can positively affect consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty, as well as brand trust (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), (Ha & Perks, 2005). Therefore, the third hypothesis of this study is:

H3. Brand Experience has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty

# Brand Commitment and Brand Loyalty

Commitment is not the same as loyalty. Commitment emerges when looking through brands before settling on decisions, while loyalty emerges later. Trust and commitment are both very important elements in ensuring a long-term orientation toward a firm’s brand. Trust and commitment are explained as antecedent of loyalty and repurchase intentions (R. M. Morgan & S. D. Hunt, 1994). Brand loyalty is expressed as the tendency to consistently choose a single brand among several brands in the same product group and continously purchase that brand (Aaker, 1994).

In the research of (Roy et al., 2017) state that commitment has a positive influence on loyalty. Customer satisfaction and commitment act as dominant enablers of customer loyalty. (Lariviere et al., 2014) observed a strong relationship between customer commitment and loyalty using longitudinal panel survey data. When a consumer is satisfied, he/she develops a high level of commitment and loyalty to the brand/firm. Hence, commitment has a direct effect on loyalty. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of this study is:

H4. Brand Commitment has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty

# Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

Researchers agree that brand trust is a key component in the customer–brand relationship. This means that trust antecedes customers’ relationship commitment (R. Morgan & S. Hunt, 1994). Therefore, in maintaining a positive relationship between consumers and providers, scholars consider trust as a crucial component (Elliott & Yannopoulou, 2007). Brand trust is achieved through mutual experiences and activities and is a necessary concept for a successful relationship between a company and its customers (Anderson & Narus, 1990). (Choi, 2012) defined trust as a belief where the consumer's chosen store will bring the best benefit to them.

Previous research states that there is a positive influence between brand trust and brand loyalty (Sahin et al., 2011), (Song & Wang, 2019). In the research of (Kocak Alan & Kabadayi, 2012), (Ahmed et al., 2014) and (Putra & Sulistyawati, 2014) state that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is defined as consumers’ favourable attitude toward a brand that results in intentions to repurchase and recommend (Anderson & Karunamoorthy, 2003). When customer loyalty to a brand increases, the vulnerability of that customer group to threats and brand attacks of competitors' products can be reduced. Therefore the fifth hypothesis of this study is:

H5. Brand Trust has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty

# Methodology

To examine the hypothesized research model, primary data collection was carried out through structured questionnaire. As the objective of this research was to investigate the brand loyalty of existing smartphone consumers, the target respondents involved in this reseach was respondents who have purchased smartphone and used it for him/herself. The number of respondents was 258 and taken using purposive sampling method. The respondents were assured the confidentiality of the information provided during the survey. The variables in this research, i.e. brand experience, brand commitment, brand trust, and brand loyalty were measured with questionnaire by using Likert scale that ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5

= strongly agree. The hypothesis were tested using Partial Least Square Structural Equation

Model (PLS SEM). The total of return questionnaire was 258. After examining the damaged questionnaire and outlier data, it was finally remained 217 data (84%) which is suitable for analysis.

# Findings & Discussion

**Demographics characteristics of respondents**

Some demographic variables were collected in this study: age, gender, level of education, occupation and average income per month, and these results are summarized in Table I. In terms of age, 75.58 percent of the respondents were between 17-25 years; 14.29 percent were between 26-35 years; 5.99 percent were between 36-45 years, 2.30 percent were between 46-55 years while 1.84 percent were 56 years and above. In terms of gender, 58.99 percent of the respondents were females and 41.01 percent were males. In terms of education, about 52.07 percent of them were senior high levels of education, 4.15 percent had Diploma III level education; 32.72 percent had Diploma IV or Bachelor level education; 10.14 percent had Masteral degree and 0.92 percent had Doctoral degree degree level of education. In terms of occupation, about 48.85 percent of the respondents were student, 3.23 percent were civil servant, 37.79 percent were employee, 7.83 percent were entrepreneur, and 2.30 percent were house wife. In terms of monthly income, about 23.04 percent were non-income earners, 23.04 percent earned a monthly income less than Rp2.515.000, about 33.18 percent earned a monthly income between Rp2.515.000 - Rp5.000.000, 7.83 percent earned a monthly income between Rp5.000.001 - Rp7.500.000, 5.07 percent earned a monthly income between Rp7.500.001 - Rp10.000.000, and 7.83 percent earned a monthly income above Rp10.000.000 (see Table I).

Table I. Demographics of Respondents

# Demographic Profile

**Category Frequency Ratio (% of the total)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | 17-25 | 164 | 75.58 |
|  | 26-35 | 31 | 14.29 |
|  | 36-45 | 13 | 5.99 |
|  | 46-55 | 5 | 2.30 |
|  | 56 and older | 4 | 1.84 |
| Gender | Male | 89 | 41.01 |
|  | Female | 128 | 58.99 |
| Level of Education | Junior High School | 0 | 0 |
|  | Senior High School | 113 | 52.07 |
|  | Diploma III | 9 | 4.15 |
|  | Diploma IV / Bachelor | 71 | 32.72 |
|  | Masteral Degree | 22 | 10.14 |
|  | Doctoral Degree | 2 | 0.92 |
| Occupation | Student | 106 | 48.85 |
|  | Civil Servant | 7 | 3.23 |
|  | Employee | 82 | 37.79 |
|  | Entrepreneur | 17 | 7.83 |
|  | House Wife | 5 | 2.30 |
| Income distribution | Non-income earners | 50 | 23.04 |
|  | Less than Rp2.515.000 | 50 | 23.04 |
|  | Rp2.515.000 - Rp5.000.000 | 72 | 33.18 |
|  | Rp5.000.001 - Rp7.500.000 | 17 | 7.83 |

Rp7.500.001 - Rp10.000.000

11 5.07

Above Rp10.000.000 17 7.83

 Notes : n = 218, 1 US$ = Rp 14.320 (currency exchanger March 10, 2022)

# Measurement model

Confirmatory analyses of the data related to each variable were performed using the partial least square structural equation model (PLS–SEM) to determine the reliability and validity of the data. More specifically, the writer opted to apply the Partial Least Squares (PLS) SME approach, using SmartPLS v3.2.9 software (Ringle et al., 2015). Construct reliability measures the extent of internal consistency of measures used, and it is assessed through the item factor loadings with acceptable value of 0.70. From Table II, all of the constructs have item loadings higher than the recommended 0.70.

Table II and Figure 1 indicate acceptable values for both the Cronbach’s α and the composite reliability. All the variables have Cronbach’s α value higher than the acceptable 0.6 (Hair et al., 2014). Similarly, the requirements for the composite reliability of 0.70 of all the variables have been established. The table also reveals that the value of the average variance extracted from each variable is greater than the acceptable threshold 0.50 for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). The estimated model gave an acceptable fit to the data (SRMR = 0.067; NFI = 0.797), indicating that the hypothesized model fits the empirical data well. Accordingly, to ensure that each variable represents distinct phenomenon, (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) criterion is used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the variables under study. As shown in Table III, the value of each pair of the construct is greater than the value of the square correlations between the pairs of constructs; consequently, the discriminant validity and convergent validity were established.

Table II. Item Loading, Construct Reliability and Discriminant Validity

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MeasurementItems | FL | CA | CR | AVE |
| BE2 | 0.779 | 0.637 | 0.805 | 0.579 |
| BE3 | 0.749 |  |  |  |
| BE4 | 0.755 |  |  |  |
| BC1 | 0.814 | 0.847 | 0.897 | 0.686 |
| BC2 | 0.810 |  |  |  |
| BC3 | 0.848 |  |  |  |
| BC4 | 0.840 |  |  |  |
| BT1 | 0.864 | 0.866 | 0.909 | 0.713 |
| BT2 | 0.830 |  |  |  |
| BT3 | 0.853 |  |  |  |
| BT4 | 0.831 |  |  |  |
| BL1 | 0.886 | 0.899 | 0.930 | 0.768 |
| BL2 | 0.876 |  |  |  |
| BL3 | 0.857 |  |  |  |
| BL4 | 0.886 |  |  |  |

Notes: BE, Brand Experience; BC, Brand Commitment; BT, Brand Trust; BL, Brand Loyalty; FL, Item Loadings; CA, Cronbach’s α; CR, Composite

 Reliability; AVE, Average Variance Extracted

Figure 1. PLS Algorithm



Table III. Discriminant Validity

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | BC | BE | BL | BT |
| BC | 0.828 |  |  |  |
| BE | 0.711 | 0.761 |  |  |
| BL | 0.806 | 0.662 | 0.876 |  |
| BT | 0.868 | 0.676 | 0.751 | 0.845 |

# Structural model

Latent variable techniques of PLS–SEM were employed to evaluate the hypotheses developed in this study. To assess the significant relationship hypothesized in the study, the direct relationship of the independent variables with the dependent variable were examined. The direct structural relationships were reported in Table IV and Figure 2.

The result indicates that brand experience positively and considerably relates to brand commitment (β = 0.038; *t* = 18.578; *p* = 0.000), thus H1 is supported. Similarly, brand experience positively relates to brand trust (β = 0.044; *t* = 15.444; *p* = 0.000), therefore H2 is also supported. Likewise, brand experience positively relates to brand loyalty (β = 0.082; *t* = 1.964; *p* = 0.050), therefore H3 is supported. Finally, brand commitment also positively relates to brand loyalty (β = 0.107; *t* = 5.080; *p* = 0.000), therefore H4 is supported. However, H5 is not supported as the statistical result shows not significant relationship of brand trust with brand loyalty (β = 0.103; *t* = 1.686; *p* = 0.092). The R2 score (0.672) indicates that overall, the independent variables, Brand Experience, Brand Commitment, and Brand Loyalty predicted the Brand Loyalty by 67 percent (figure 1)

Figure 2. PLS Bootstrapping



Table IV. Hypothesis Testing Results

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Hypothesis Original | Sample STDEV *t*- *p*- Result |
|  | Sample | Mean |  | statistics | values |  |
| H1. BE  BC | 0.711 | 0.715 | 0.043 | 16.601 | 0.000 | Significant |
| H2. BE  BT | 0.676 | 0.681 | 0.043 | 15.682 | 0.000 | Significant |
| H3. BE  BL | 0.160 | 0.162 | 0.082 | 1.964 | 0.050 | Significant |
| H4. BC  BL | 0.541 | 0.532 | 0.107 | 5.080 | 0.000 | Significant |
| H5. BT  BL | 0.173 | 0.182 | 0.103 | 1.686 | 0.092 | Not Significant |

 Note: \*Significant at *p* ≤ 0.05

# Discussion

First, this study found that brand experience has a significant positive and direct influence on brand commitment. This result confirms previous studies findings (Şahin et al., 2012) and (Johnson et al., 2006) that brand experience has significant effects on brand commitment.

Second, this study found that brand experience has a significant influence on brand trust. The result confirms previous research stated that brand experience is proven to have a significant effect on brand trust (Chinomona, 2013); (Yohanes Surya, 2014).

Third, this study found that brand experience has a significant influence on brand loyalty. This study confirms previous research stated that there is a significant relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010), (Ha & Perks, 2005).

Fourth, this study found that brand commitment has a significant positive and direct influence on brand loyalty. This study is consistent with the findings of (Roy et al., 2017), (Lariviere et al., 2014) that brand commitment has a significant influence on brand loyalty.

Fifth, this study found that brand trust has no significant influence on brand loyalty. This result is also contrary with the previous research stated that there is a significant relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty (Sahin et al., 2011); (Song & Wang, 2019); (Kocak Alan & Kabadayi, 2012); (Ahmed et al., 2014) and (Putra & Sulistyawati, 2014).

# Conclusion

This study uses data from a survey of 217 consumers who have purchased smartphone. This research aimed to investigate the effects of brand experience, brand commitment, and brand trust on brand loyalty of smartphone brands in Indonesia. This study develops of five hypotheses. The result shows a positive relationship between brand experience with brand commitment, brand experience with brand trust, brand experience with brand loyalty and brand commitment with brand loyalty. However, the study found that brand trust has no significant influence on brand loyalty.

This study provides empirical knowledge for marketing managers in enhancing their marketing strategies. The manager should consider the target market weather the markets consist of consumers who are loyal to the brand or loyal to the price. Consumers who are loyal to the brand will prefer reputable product while consumers who are loyal to the price will prefer affordable product. The recommendation for a future research should focus on primary data collection and unit analysis. The sample of the study should be more evenly distributed in each age category so it can generate population. The unit analysis can be replaced by other shopping goods.

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