

BRAND PERSONALITY MATTERS: ENHANCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Customers are an important part of a company. Therefore, customer loyalty is an important aspect that needs to be obtained by the Company. One of the steps to increase customer loyalty is through brand personality. This study aims to see how brand personality can increase customer loyalty. This research will be carried out with a descriptive qualitative approach. The data used in this study comes from various research results and previous studies. The results of this study then found that brand personality is an important factor in building customer loyalty. Through an attractive brand personality, customers will feel personally connected to the brand, where which will then increase trust and cause purchasing decisions to be more consistent.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Customer Loyalty, Retail Industry.

A. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has made all aspects of life develop rapidly in the fields of technology, economy, and socio-culture. This globalization not only creates opportunities but also challenges. The increasingly rapid developments in this era have a significant impact on business competition in the business world. There are various kinds of goals that a company wants to achieve, one of which is to maintain the company's survival and also to generate large profits for the company, and keep its customers from moving to competing companies (Chettri, 2022). Profits are generated by the company through the company's operational activities. Increasingly competitive competition in the business world causes business people to compete in finding alternative ways to be able to survive in business competition. Companies are required to always innovate to be able to create higher competitiveness compared to their business competitors. This innovation must also be carried out by the company to seize and maintain its market share from competitors (Heikal et al., 2022).

Customers play an important role in the survival of a company. Various alternative ways and efforts must be made by the company to satisfy customer

needs through various strategies that aim to make customers loyal to the products produced by the company. When a customer is satisfied, the customer will not move to another company. Customer loyalty is strongly influenced by brand personality. A good brand personality will form a good corporate image and play a major role in sales volume (Guo et al., 2022). Loyalty to a brand is strongly influenced by the number of people who are loyal to that brand. This is because loyal customers can invite and inform others to buy the brand. According to Aaker, customers who already feel confident in a brand produced by the company are most likely to buy back products with that brand, even spreading the good news about the company in question (Guan et al., 2022).

Consumer loyalty has a crucial role in the retail industry. Securing and maintaining a loyal customer base is the key to success for any retail business. Loyal consumers tend to make repeated purchases, providing a stable and sustainable income for the company. In addition, they are also more likely to give positive recommendations to friends and family, helping to expand market reach and enhance brand reputation (Liu-Thompkins et al., 2022). With consumer loyalty, companies can also reduce marketing costs because they do not need to spend a lot of resources to attract new customers continuously. In addition, loyal customers are also more accepting of price changes and a little more tolerant of service imperfections. Therefore, building and maintaining consumer loyalty must be the main focus for the retail industry to achieve sustainable growth and maintain competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market (Nayal et al., 2022).

The retail industry needs to strategically improve brand personality to increase customer loyalty. Brand personality includes elements such as character, image, and values associated with the company's brand. By developing a strong and relevant brand personality, customers will be more likely to identify with the brand and feel emotionally connected (Mao et al., 2020). This will build customer trust and loyalty, which in turn will encourage them to choose the brand over other competitors when shopping. An attractive brand personality can also create a more positive and meaningful shopping experience for customers, creating stronger and more sustainable bonds between brands and consumers. Thus, increasing brand personality is a crucial step in strengthening customer loyalty and supporting long-term success in the retail industry (Nadeem et al., 2021).

Through the brief explanation above, this research then intends to see how loyalty can be increased through good brand personality in the retail industry.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Brand Personality

Brand personality is a set of traits, characteristics, and human personality related to and applicable to a particular brand or product. Brand personality is an effort made by a company to make characteristics formed as a reflection of a brand of a product or service to form a good image which will ultimately be connected to consumer purchase intentions through the created brand preferences (Coelho et al., 2020). Brand personality is a certain mix of human

nature that is associated with a particular brand. Brand personality offers a way to increase consumer interest, attachment, and attitude toward a particular brand. Through brand personality, consumers are very likely to choose a brand where their personality matches their personality (Rup et al., 2021).

Brand personality is a concept to differentiate a product from other products by creating logos, names, brands, and packaging, which are formed and based on certain personalities from the community, to create an emotional bond between consumers and a brand. Brand personality in a brand will encourage consumers to respond with feelings and emotions toward the brand. So the existence of emotional bonds can make consumers feel closer to the product brand (Andersson, 2020). Brand personality is one part of the strength of the brand that is created to introduce the product and maintain it in the market. Brand personality is built by taking into account the characteristics of existing consumers so that later it will attract the attention of consumers in the market both physically and emotionally (Valette-Florence & Valette-Florence, 2020).

Some experts have a different understanding of brand personality. The explanation of brand personality according to various other experts is as follows:

- a. According to Azoulay and Kapferer, brand personality is a set of human personality traits that are applicable and relevant to brands.
- b. According to Aaker, brand personality is a set of human characteristics associated with a brand.
- c. According to Kotler and Keller, brand personality is a certain mix of human traits that can be associated with a particular brand.
- d. According to Solomon, brand personality is a set of human characteristics that are attributed to a product as if the product were a human being (Mariutti & Giraldi, 2020)

According to Azoulay and Kapferer, brand personality factors can be classified into five stages known as OCEAN, namely; openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The explanation is as follows:

- a. Openness to Experience
Openness to experience is the tendency to explore new experiences and innovative ideas. Individuals who have openness to experience can be described as creative, imaginative, reflective, and modern. Meanwhile, individuals with low openness to experience can be characterized as conventional people, who have low interest and are not analytical. A person's openness to something can trigger the acceptance of something new in one's life, so the more open people are, the more they accept new situations. Openness can also increase one's skills (Silvia & Christensen, 2020).
- b. Conscientiousness
Conscientiousness is a tendency to discipline, responsibility, and duty in achieving one's own goals. Individuals who have conscientiousness will tend to avoid problems and determine a high level of success through planning and having goals and perseverance, they tend to respect other

people with the intelligence and abilities that that person has. Meanwhile, individuals who have low conscientiousness will easily give up, lack ambition and try things that provide short-term pleasure (Spielmann et al., 2022).

c. Extraversion

Extraversion is the tendency to stimulate and benefit from others. Extraversion describes the existence of a person that the person is assertive, dominant, energetic, active, talkative, and enthusiastic. Individuals who have high extraversion are often referred to as extroverts, tend to be full of enthusiasm, like people and groups, and seek crowds and stimulation. Meanwhile, individuals who have low extraversion are often called introverts, who prefer to spend time alone and have characters that return to extroverts, namely calm, careful, and less dependent on the social world. The differences in these basic characteristics affect a person's attitude when interacting with the environment. Individuals who have extrovert characteristics tend to get along with other people more easily than people with introverted characteristics (Flynn et al., 2023).

d. Agreeableness

Agreeableness is the tendency to accept what is. Individuals who have high agreeableness have good tendencies, are friendly, generous, happy to help, and can unite desires with others. Meanwhile, individuals who have low agreeableness will place themselves above the interests of others. They generally do not care about other people and do not like to involve themselves with others and tend to be skeptical of other people's intentions which causes them to tend to be unfriendly, and can be characterized as manipulative, self-oriented, suspicious, and cruel (Mathur et al., 2023).

e. Neuroticism

Neuroticism is the tendency to accept unpleasant emotions easily. Individuals who have high neuroticism have a negative emotional experience including anxiety, hostility, depression, and self-consciousness. Individuals who have high neuroticism are very reactive emotionally. They respond emotionally to events that don't affect other people and their reactions tend to be higher than normal. Brands interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and frustrating even if mild. These negative emotional reactions last for quite a long time and will affect a person's view of an event or action (McNeil & Repetti, 2023).

2. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the tendency of customers to buy a product or use services provided by a company with a high level of consistency. Customer loyalty will be the key to success not only in the short term but sustainable competitive advantage. This is because customer loyalty has strategic value for the company. The rewards of loyalty are long-term and cumulative. So, the

longer the loyalty of a customer, the greater the profit a company can get from a consumer (Dam & Dam, 2021).

According to Oliver states that customer loyalty is a customer's commitment to hold deeply to re-subscribe or re-purchase selected products or services consistently in the future, even though situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential to cause behavior changes. Meanwhile, Morais said that customer loyalty is a customer's commitment to a store brand, or supplier, based on a very positive attitude and is reflected in consistent repeat purchases (Setiyowati & Riyadi, 2022).

Furthermore, Parasuraman defines customer loyalty in the context of service marketing as a response that is closely related to pledges or promises to uphold commitments that underlie the continuity of relationships and is usually reflected in ongoing purchases from the same service provider based on dedication and pragmatic constraints (Anabila, 2021). Keeping customers happy and loyal is a challenge for companies and the best way to survive the competition. Hasan said customer loyalty is people who buy regularly and repeatedly, they continuously and repeatedly come to the same place to satisfy their desires by having a product or getting a service and paying for the product (Tabrani et al., 2021).

Loyal customers are an important asset for the company. This can be seen from the characteristics it has. Griffin states that loyal customers have the following characteristics:

- a. Make regular purchases
- b. Make purchases across all product or service lines
- c. Recommend other products
- d. Demonstrate immunity from the attractiveness of similar products from competitors (Syafarudin, 2021)

According to Baloglu which states that customer loyalty has five aspects, namely trust, psychological commitment, switching costs, publicity behavior (word-of-mouth), and cooperation. Furthermore, Hasan said that the aspects of customer loyalty are:

- a. Repurchasing is defined as consumer behavior that only buys a product/service repeatedly and consistently in the future.
- b. Customer commitment to products/services. Loyal customers not only repurchase a product/service but also have a positive commitment and attitude toward the product/service.
- c. Word-of-mouth recommendations Customers who have product/service loyalty will be willing to tell good things about the company and its products to other people, friends, and family which is far more persuasive than advertising (Reinita Andriyani & Arie Yudhistira, 2023).

Based on some of the definitions from some of the experts above, it can be concluded that customer loyalty is someone who buys regularly and repeatedly. They continuously and repeatedly come to the same place to satisfy their desires by having a product or getting a service and paying for the product (Ricardianto et al., 2023).

C. METHOD

This research will be carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach. The method used in this research is a literature study. The research data used in this research comes from various results of previous studies and studies which still have relevance to the content of the research. When the research data has been successfully collected, then the data will be processed, so that the research results can be found (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Factors Influencing Brand Personality in the Retail Industry

The internal factors that shape brand personality are the essence of the brand itself. It includes the values, corporate culture, and vision that shape brand identity and characteristics. The values instilled in the organization will be reflected in brand communication, product design, and interactions with customers. For example, a company with a strong innovation culture may have a more dynamic and futuristic brand personality, while a company with a focus on sustainability may reflect an environmentally friendly and responsible brand personality. Meanwhile, external factors also play an important role in shaping brand personality. Customer reactions to brands, their perceptions of product and service quality, and feedback received from the market all influence how brands are viewed and interpreted. Positive perceptions can strengthen brand personality and create emotional bonds between brands and customers, while negative perceptions can damage brand image and change the desired brand identity.

Furthermore, brand marketing and communication strategies play a key role in shaping customer perceptions of brand personality. Through selected marketing messages, companies can direct the way their brand wants to be seen by customers. For example, an advertising campaign that portrays the brand as an industry pioneer or that cites the values of togetherness and kinship will create a distinct brand personality in the minds of consumers. Brand communication also plays a vital role in strengthening the desired brand personality elements. Consistency in conveying brand messages will help build a clear brand personality that is easily identifiable by customers. In this regard, brand identity must be articulated and followed in all aspects of marketing, including social media, advertising campaigns, and promotional activities.

The role of brand identity is very important in shaping brand personality. Brand identity includes elements such as logos, colors, typography, and visual styles, which directly contribute to the perception and image of the brand in the eyes of customers. A consistent and easy-to-remember identity helps brands build a strong impression and provide consumers with a consistent experience. In addition, brand values also play a role in shaping brand personality. Brand values reflect the beliefs and principles espoused by the company and are reflected in brand products, services, and communications. For example, a brand that promotes honesty, integrity, and social care will create a brand personality that reflects these traits.

Brand personality also has a close relationship with the overall corporate image. The corporate image includes perceptions that are built through interactions with customers, media, stakeholders, and society at large. A brand personality that is consistent with the company's image will create a strong and convincing impression for customers that the brand can be trusted and is following the values held by the company. The relationship between brand personality and brand values also reflects the extent to which brands can deliver their brand promises to customers. For example, if a brand exalts product quality and excellence, then customers will expect an experience that lives up to that promise. When brand personality successfully matches product quality and customer experience, customer loyalty can increase because they feel satisfied and believe in the brand.

In facing increasingly fierce competition in the retail industry, companies need to understand how crucial brand personality is in increasing customer loyalty. Internal and external factors, marketing strategies, brand identity, and their relationship to corporate values and image must be carefully considered in developing a successful and market-relevant brand personality. A good integration of these factors will help create a brand that is consistent, convincing, and reflects the identity and characteristics desired by the company. That way, customer loyalty can increase because they feel emotionally connected to the brand, feel satisfied with the shopping experience presented, and believe that the brand is following the values they profess. By strengthening brand personality, retail companies can build long-term relationships with customers and strengthen their position in the market.

2. The Impact of Brand Personality on Customer Loyalty in the Retail Industry

Brand personality has a crucial role in shaping customer loyalty in the retail industry. The close relationship between brand personality and customer loyalty reflects how important it is for brands to have characteristics and identities that can affect consumers emotionally. When a brand has an attractive brand personality that is relevant to customers' values, they tend to feel personally connected to the brand. As a result, customers will be more likely to remain loyal and choose to continue shopping with the brand rather than seek alternatives in the marketplace. Brand personality also has a significant effect on customer purchasing decisions. When a brand has characteristics that match customer preferences and personalities, customers will feel that the brand reflects them. This creates a sense of identity and affiliation between the customer and the brand. When customers feel connected to a brand emotionally, they will be more likely to choose to purchase from that brand because they believe that the brand understands and serves their needs and wants.

Brand personality also plays a role in creating a positive and meaningful shopping experience for customers. When a brand has the characteristics of being pleasant, friendly, and customer satisfaction oriented, the shopping experience will be more enjoyable and exhilarating for customers. Positive interactions with

brands, whether through good service, quality products, or attractive packaging, can increase customer satisfaction levels. This positive shopping experience will increase the probability that the customer will return and shop in the future. In addition, brand personality also contributes to creating a meaningful shopping experience for customers. When a brand has characteristics that match the values and aspirations of customers, consumers will feel that shopping at the brand adds meaning and added value to their lives. For example, brands that promote sustainability and are socially responsible can provide a sense of fulfillment and emotional satisfaction for customers who are environmentally and socially concerned.

Brand personality also has an impact on customer's intentions to recommend the brand to others. When customers have positive and emotional experiences with a brand, they are more likely to want to share those experiences with others. They will feel proud and believe that the brand has a value that is worthy of being appreciated and recommended. Therefore, a strong brand personality can increase the probability of customers giving positive recommendations to their friends, family, or acquaintances. In the competitive retail industry, creating customer loyalty is one of the main goals for brands. Brand personality is a powerful tool to achieve this goal. When customers feel emotionally connected to a brand personality, they will feel more loyal to the brand and tend to stay loyal for a longer period.

Appropriate brand personality can also form a strong and memorable brand image. When the brand personality that is carried consistently reflects the brand personality, customers will more easily remember and recognize the brand during intense market competition. This can help brands gain a superior position in the minds of customers and become the top choice when they want to shop. In the context of a brand-customer relationship, trust also plays an important role. A trustworthy and authentic brand personality will create customer trust in the brand. This trust will strengthen customer loyalty because they feel confident that the brand will fulfill its promises and values.

Analysis of customer behavior also shows that customers tend to shop consistently at brands that have a consistent brand personality. When a brand can maintain consistent characteristics and identity over some time, customers will feel comfortable and familiar with the brand. This can reduce risk for the customer and provide an additional incentive to remain loyal. Overall, the impact of brand personality on customer loyalty in the retail industry is very significant. By creating a relevant, engaging, and consistent brand personality, brands can build strong emotional bonds and affiliations with customers. Brand personality helps create a positive and meaningful shopping experience for customers, increases the intention to recommend the brand to others, and ultimately forms long-term customer loyalty. Therefore, investing in building and strengthening brand personality is an important step for retail companies that wish to achieve sustainable growth and success.

3. Strategies to Increase Brand Personality in the Retail Industry

Preparation of the right marketing strategy is key to building and communicating a brand personality that is in line with the target market in the retail industry. An important first step is to understand well who the brand's main target market is, including their characteristics, preferences, and values that are relevant to them. Based on this understanding, companies can formulate appropriate marketing messages, including the tone of voice, communication style, and brand values to be conveyed to customers. An effective marketing strategy will help create the desired brand perception and build a positive impression in the eyes of consumers. Furthermore, the role of visual design and brand identity is very important in describing the desired brand personality. The visual design includes elements such as logos, colors, typography, and other visual elements that make up a brand identity. Selecting design elements that match the characteristics of the brand and target market can help create a consistent and attractive brand image for customers. An attractive and memorable design will help the brand to be more recognized and remembered by customers.

The importance of consistency in the execution of brand personality strategies across various customer channels and touchpoints cannot be ignored. In an increasingly diverse retail industry with distribution channels, consistency is key to creating a unified brand experience. All aspects of a brand, from marketing communications to product design and the shopping experience in physical or online stores, must reflect the same brand personality. With consistency, customers will more easily identify brands and feel connected to brands in every interaction they experience. Brand storytelling is an effective strategy for strengthening and effectively articulating brand personality. By using interesting and relevant stories, brands can communicate brand values and characteristics more emotionally and convincingly. Through strong narratives, brands can create emotional bonds with customers and make them more engaged with the brand. Brand stories can be shared across multiple channels, including advertising, social media, and marketing campaigns, to create a broader and deeper impact.

Selection of the right platform and communication channel is also an important part of the strategy to increase brand personality. In an increasingly digital retail industry, social media and online platforms have become important channels for interacting with customers. Brands must understand consumer preferences and behavior regarding the use of social media and present content that is relevant and interesting. In addition, e-commerce platforms can also be used to strengthen brand personality by providing a shopping experience that matches brand characteristics. The importance of understanding competitors and the brand's position in the market must also be considered in a brand personality strategy. Identifying the uniqueness of the brand and its competitive differences helps in building a brand personality that differentiates the brand from competitors. By understanding the market position, brands can focus more on conveying relevant messages and highlighting their unique values to customers.

Customer engagement is also a key element in brand personality strategy. Brands must create interactive and participatory experiences for customers, so they feel involved and have a stronger emotional bond with the brand. This can be achieved through creative campaigns, contests, or loyalty programs that add value to customers and encourage them to actively participate in brand activities. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the brand personality strategy is also important. Companies must monitor how customers respond to brand communications, design, and the shopping experience. Data and feedback from customers can provide valuable insights for improving and enhancing brand personality. By listening to customers, brands can be more responsive to their needs and wants and can continue to develop a market-relevant brand personality.

Sometimes, brands need to adapt to changing market trends and needs. Therefore, a brand personality strategy must be flexible and able to adapt to changes in the business environment and customer preferences. A dynamic brand personality will be more relevant and can remain attractive to customers in the longer term. Overall, a strategy to increase brand personality in the retail industry is an important step toward building strong emotional bonds and affiliations with customers. Developing the right marketing strategy, the role of visual design and brand identity, consistency in brand personality execution, and the use of brand storytelling will help brands create positive impressions and provide meaningful shopping experiences for customers. By focusing on an effective strategy, the brand can achieve its long-term goal of creating customer loyalty and strengthening the brand's position in the market.

E. CONCLUSION

Brand personality has a very important role in the retail industry in increasing customer loyalty. Factors such as the right marketing strategy, appropriate visual design and brand identity, consistency in the execution of brand personality strategy, and effective use of brand storytelling all contribute to building a strong emotional connection between brands and customers. With an attractive and relevant brand personality, customers tend to feel personally connected to the brand, increase trust, and make more consistent purchasing decisions. In the competitive retail industry, brand personality is a powerful tool for creating long-term bonds with customers, strengthening brand image, and winning the competition in an increasingly dynamic market.

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