

THE INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ADVOCACY, BRAND TRUST, BRAND LOVE, AND BRAND RESPECT ON BRAND LOYALTY (CASE STUDY ON UNIQLO BRAND CUSTOMERS IN SURABAYA)



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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of celebrity advocacy, brand trust, brand love, and brand respect on brand loyalty. This research uses quantitative research methods. The sampling technique is a sampling technique of 5% of the existing population. The sample used was 105 customers of Brand Uniqlo Indonesia in Surabaya City with an age range of 20-24 years. Data collection was obtained from distributing questionnaires and analyzed by software SmartPLS 4.0 version. Based on the research results, it shows that celebrity advocacy has a significant effect on brand loyalty, brand trust has a significant effect on brand loyalty, brand love has a significant effect on brand loyalty, and brand respect has a significant effect on brand loyalty, brand trust has a significant effect on brand loyalty.

Keywords: Celebrity Advocacy, Brand Trust, Brand Love, Brand Respect, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The clothing and textile industry is a sector that actively contributes to driving the Indonesian economy. Development and growth show positive values due to these conditions. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in the first quarter of 2024, the rate of Gross Domestic Growth (GDP) of the Textile and Clothing Industry increased by 2.64% compared to the same quarter last year. Referring to the Bank Indonesia Prompt Manufacturing Index (PMI-BI) 2024, this industry managed to have an index of 57.40% and is experiencing an expansion phase.

The increase and positive growth shown by the data above shows the great potential of the Indonesian Textile and Apparel Industry. This has also become a concern for foreign companies to expand their business in Indonesia, one of which is Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. a Japanese company that is the parent company of the Uniqlo brand. The company expanded in Indonesia starting in 2013 by opening its first store at Lotte Shopping Avenue, Jakarta. Uniqlo continues to develop its business in Indonesia by opening stores in various shopping centers. As of April 2024, Uniqlo has 73 stores spread across 27 cities in Indonesia. The large number of stores shows the success of Brand Uniqlo's business expansion in Indonesia.

This was also followed by an increase in its operating income. In the competition between global fast fashion brands, Uniqlo ranks third after Zara and H&M. As of August 31, 2023, Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. recorded a consolidated revenue of 2.7 trillion yen. This was an increase of 20.2% from the previous year. Uniqlo International recorded an increase in revenue of 28.5% with total revenue of 1.4371 trillion yen or around 148 trillion rupiah (Rahayu and Setiawan, 2024).

The unique values carried by the company, need to be communicated to customers widely so that it can be a promotional strategy to introduce the uniqueness, advantages, and advantages of a brand. This is referred to as brand advocacy, which is an effort made by the company to communicate good values, such as the uniqueness and superiority of a brand to customers (Morhart et al., 2009). One of Uniqlo Indonesia's efforts in building brand advocacy is working with celebrities. In January 2024, Uniqlo Indonesia announced Maudy Ayunda as the Official Brand Advocate for the LifeWear Spring/Summer 2024 collection. Maudy Ayunda is the first celebrity to become a brand advocate for Uniqlo Indonesia.

In building brand advocacy, Uniqlo Indonesia seeks to build relationships with customers by conveying the positive values of a brand. Maudy Ayunda's role as a celebrity is not only limited to attracting attention from the general public, but also plays a role in conveying the values, uniqueness, and excellence of a brand. Public opinion of a brand is also influenced by celebrities who have a good reputation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celebrity Advocacy

Based on research conducted by Subbiah and Sathish (2020), celebrities are an inspiration for the younger generation, they imitate celebrities in terms of dress and other lifestyles. The results of this study show the influence of celebrities in increasing sales and brand loyalty. According to Firdaus & Luxianto (2024), in addition to the younger generation, celebrities can also influence the general public who lack understanding of the specifications that must be assessed as the advantages of a brand, so they associate celebrities with the quality of a brand and considerations in making purchases. According to Yaqin & Tussifah (2020), Brand Advocates are the most influential party in the promotion and sales of a brand. The presence of celebrities as brand advocates can increase public trust in a brand. The reason is that a brand advocate does not receive payment and is not bound by a formal contract with a brand.

Brand Trust

According to Ballester in Christian et al. (2023), a sense of security and reliability is a sense of public trust in a brand. This trust is based on the expectation that the brand can act best for its customers. Bezbaruah et al., (2022), brand trust is the willingness of customers to trust the brand's ability to achieve its goals. Customers create brand trust based on their positive thoughts and expectations about a brand.

Brand Love

Carroll & Ahuvia in Hariandja & Suryanto (2021) Brand love is defined as the emotional attachment of the relationship between customers and a particular brand. This can be shown by the customer's desire and effort in buying or getting services from a particular brand. Where customers buy products not only based on needs but are more influenced by the desire, excitement, and satisfaction obtained from a brand.

Brand Respect

Brand Respect is a sense of admiration or respect felt by customers after the experience of using a brand. This is influenced by customer perceptions or assessments regarding the level of reliability and quality of the brand that refers to the promise, incorporation of personality, and the strength of the brand positioning is also able to form optimism, trust, and respect through customer dedication (Hutabarat & Pakpahan, 2023).

Brand Loyalty

The strong desire of customers to use one brand continuously and not switch to another brand can be measured as brand loyalty. According to Ragda et al., (2023), customers who have a consistent commitment to continue using a brand for a long time. Customers who are loyal to a brand tend to be more interested in buying new products from the same brand, compared to buying similar products from other brands that they do not recognize.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the population used is customers of Brand Uniqlo Indonesia in Surabaya City with an age range of 20-24 years. Based on data from the Surabaya Central Statistics Agency (BPS), in 2022 the population of Surabaya City aged 20-24 years is 212,881 people. The sample in this study utilizes statistical calculation techniques using the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 105 respondent samples. This research employs quantitative data, and its primary data collection involves providing a questionnaire to respondents. The data collection methods used in this study uses questionnaire methods and are analyzed by SmartPLS 4.0 version.

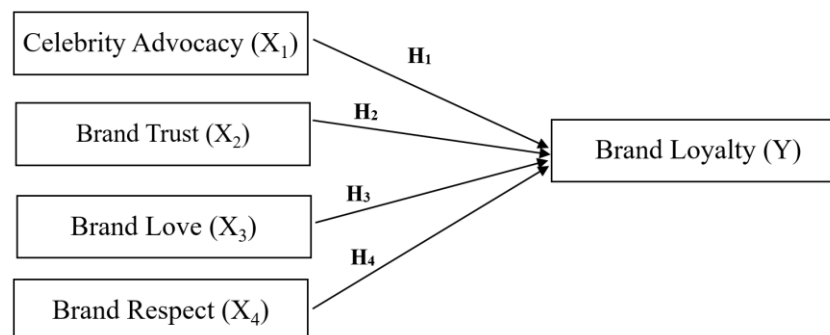


Figure 1
Research Framework

The research framework in this study is made to explain several hypotheses, namely the effect of Celebrity Advocacy on Brand Loyalty, the effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty, the effect of Brand Love on Brand Loyalty, and the effect of Brand Respect on Brand Loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of Celebrity Advocacy on Brand Loyalty

“Celebrity Advocacy has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty” where the higher the level of Celebrity Advocacy, the higher the level of Brand Loyalty. The success of a brand in building “Celebrity Advocacy, Brand Trust, Brand Love, and Brand Respect” influences “Brand Loyalty”. Celebrity can increase customers' positive perceptions of a brand, namely perceptions of the quality and uniqueness of a brand. This positive customer perception has a positive influence on brand loyalty, so it is utilized by companies as an effort to build it (Harwati, et al., 2024).

This research can help companies consider working with celebrities as brand advocates. One of them examines the impact that celebrities have on the audience. For fans, celebrities are inspirational figures who can influence lifestyles, including clothing styles. Among customers of a brand, the general public who lack understanding of the specifications that must be assessed as the advantages of a brand tend to associate celebrities with the quality of a brand and considerations in making purchases.

Celebrity is an inspiration for the younger generation, they imitate celebrities in terms of dress and other lifestyles. The results of this study show the influence of celebrities in increasing sales and brand loyalty (Subbiah and Sathish, 2020). According to Purohit & Arora (2022), in addition to the younger generation, celebrities can also influence the general public who lack understanding of the specifications that must be assessed as the advantages of a brand, so they associate celebrities with the quality of a brand and considerations in making purchases.

Celebrity credibility can affect trust as measured by customers' positive perceptions of a brand. Celebrity credibility and customer trust are interconnected with each other. A brand that can have these two variables is proven to increase brand loyalty in customers

(Firdaus & Luxianto, 2024). Celebrity credibility is proven to affect customer behavior such as the level of trust, number of reviews, and popularity of a brand (Purohit & Arora, 2022). Celebrity can increase customers' positive perceptions of a brand, namely perceptions of the quality and uniqueness of a brand. This positive customer perception has a positive influence on brand loyalty, so it is utilized by companies as an effort to build it (Harwati, et al., 2024).

The Effect of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

“Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty”, where the higher the level of Brand Trust, the higher the level of Brand Loyalty. Huang's (2017) research results show the positive direction and significance of brand trust when influencing brand loyalty. The basis is a sense of security that creates positive perceptions and customer trust in a brand. According to Chalil et al. (2020), this sense of security affects customer behavior, one of which is the characteristic of brand loyalty, namely continuous repurchase behavior. The research results of Firdausiah et al. (2024) show reliability as the strongest indicator of brand trust. The existence of brand trust is based on the fulfillment of customer expectations of the performance or performance of a brand both in quality and functionally. The fulfillment of customer expectations is evidence of reliability so that customers feel trust in a brand.

Akoglu and Ozbek (2022) and Atulkar (2020) show that brand trust affects the formation of brand loyalty in customers. Also supported by Prasetya (2016), shows that increasing brand trust increases brand loyalty. Gonçalves (2019) explains the important role of companies in striving to build brand trust because, in the long run, customer trust can form brand loyalty. Companies can also maintain product quality consistently to strive for customer purchase retention. Where in this study, purchase retention is measured to assess brand loyalty.

The Effect of Brand Love on Brand Loyalty

“Brand Love has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty”, where the higher the level of Brand Love, the higher the level of Brand Loyalty. Hayuni & Sharif's (2023) research results show the positive direction and significance of brand love when influencing brand loyalty. This research explains the importance of company efforts to build relationships between customers and brands because this can increase positive emotional bonds by

customers. Customers who are emotionally attached to a brand tend to commit to buy products or use services from the same brand repeatedly. In addition, customers also have the desire to buy a brand in large quantities and are willing to show their pleasure with a brand to those around them (Kazmi & Khalique in Hariandja & Suryanto, 2021).

The sense of customer delight can provide a positive experience that makes customers feel attracted and has an addictive impact on customers so that customers have a strong desire to continue using a brand. So, it can be concluded that customers who feel happy with a brand tend to have a higher quantity of repeat purchases. This can affect brand loyalty because repeated purchases made continuously are one of the indicators of brand loyalty. Research is in accordance with Hariandja & Suryanto (2021), where a positive emotional feeling and a sense of customer pleasure when using a brand is a factor in brand loyalty so companies must pay attention to it. The results of this study show the company's success in increasing brand love through customer service quality, where the company provides customer service that is able to answer customer needs so that an emotional feeling can be built in the form of customer attachment and closeness to the brand.

Customer service has an important role in the emotional feeling that customers feel towards a brand because it is responsible for building relationships and communicating directly with customers. Therefore, companies strive to provide services that are able to build positive customer perceptions of brands. In addition to customer service, companies also try to build brand love by holding promotions that can provide the perception that a brand can provide benefits and advantages for customers, for example, such as vouchers and discounts without any special requirements or minimum purchases at a certain price. The existence of customer perceptions regarding benefits and advantages is the formation of a sense of pleasure towards the brand, which is one of the indicators of brand love.

The Effect of Brand Respect on Brand Loyalty

“Brand Respect has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty”, where the higher the level of Brand Respect, the higher the level of Brand Loyalty. The emotional feeling felt by customers as a factor of brand respect can have an impact on the customer decision-making process, customer behavior, and customer loyalty. The significant impact of this emotional feeling, in the long run, can affect the relationship between consumers and

a brand. The significant impact of this emotional feeling, in the long run, can affect the relationship between consumers and a brand. This is because the existence of positive customer feelings is a factor in the dynamics of activities related to customer consumptive behavior (Hariandja & Suryanto, 2021).

According to research by Setyowati (2022), brand respect has an influence on repurchase intentions, customer willingness to pay premium prices, and positive word of mouth. These three things are aspects of brand loyalty, so it can be concluded that brand respect has a positive influence on brand loyalty. According to Roberts in Hutabarat & Pakpahan (2023), the combination of these three things can affect emotional feelings towards a brand, which further impacts customer perceptions or how customers assess a brand, especially in functional aspects, quality, specifications, performance, and reputation of a brand.

Brand respect can affect the relationship between customers and a brand both in the short term where customers have the desire to keep using a brand. In addition, there is a long-term influence where customers have the intention to increase the use and purchase of a brand. The significant impact of this emotional feeling, in the long run, can affect the relationship between consumers and a brand. This is because the existence of positive customer feelings is a factor in the dynamics of activities related to customer consumptive behavior (Hariandja & Suryanto, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The results of this hypothesis test provide theoretical and practical conclusions. The first hypothesis can add to the literature on the effect of celebrity advocacy on brand loyalty. Celebrity can affect customer loyalty as measured by customers' positive perceptions of a brand. Maudy Ayunda's role as a brand advocate is not only limited to attracting customers' attention to buy a brand, but also plays a role in conveying the values, uniqueness, and advantages of a brand.

The second hypothesis can help recognize the importance of the company's role in building brand trust because customer trust affects the long-term relationship between customers and a brand. Companies must pay more attention to product quality consistently

to strive for customer purchase retention. Where in this study, purchase retention is measured to assess brand loyalty. Companies consistently need to meet customer expectations and form brands that can solve customer problems.

The third hypothesis can be a reference for companies to review the impact of brand love. Customers' pleasure in shopping or using a brand's products can provide positive experiences and addictive effects. By understanding this, companies can start designing strategies to form emotional attachments with customers. Companies can also design products that not only fulfill customers' basic needs, but also provide comfort, joy, and a sense of satisfaction for customers.

The fourth hypothesis can be a reference for companies to realize the importance of building brand respect. Companies must consider the cultural and psychological aspects of the community groups that are their target market. This requires long-term efforts by the company to understand the needs, desires, and lifestyles of customers. The company must also be able to represent, describe, or convey the characteristics, uniqueness, or identity of a community that is its target market, then a brand has greater potential to gain recognition or respect from the community.

The focus of this study is on the variables of Celebrity Advocacy, Brand Trust, Brand Love, Brand Respect, and Brand Loyalty. Therefore, it is hoped that future research will incorporate additional variables to comprehensively study the factors influencing Brand Loyalty.

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