The Influence of Emotional Branding and Online Community Support on Brand Loyalty Mediated by Consumer Value Perceptions

Fatimah Abdillah[1][✉], Heriyana[2], Bella Hartati[3]

[1]Institut Bisnis dan Informatika Kesatuan
[2]Universitas Malikussaleh
[3]Universitas Adiwangsa Jambi

Abstract

This research investigates the complex dynamics of brand loyalty within the organizational framework of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. It examines the interplay between emotional branding, online community support, consumer value perceptions, and brand loyalty among employees. The research reveals that emotional branding significantly influences brand loyalty directly and indirectly through consumer value perceptions. Conversely, online community support has a direct impact on brand loyalty, but its influence is not significantly mediated by consumer value perceptions. These nuanced findings highlight the importance of tailored strategies in optimizing emotional connections and online community engagement to foster brand loyalty within the workforce. The study offers practical insights for organizational practitioners aiming to enhance employee commitment and brand allegiance through refined approaches to emotional branding and online community support.

Keywords: *Emotional Branding, Online Community Support, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Value Perceptions*

✉   Corresponding author : Fatimah Abdillah
Email Address : fatimah@ibik.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary marketing, understanding and harnessing the power of emotional branding and online community support have become imperative for brand success (Arpah et al., 2023). This article explores the intricate interplay between emotional branding, online community engagement, and brand loyalty, with the mediation of consumer perceived value (Huang et al., 2022). Emotional branding seeks to establish a deep and enduring connection between consumers and brands by tapping into their emotions, fostering a sense of identification and resonance. Concurrently, the influence of online communities in shaping brand perceptions and loyalty cannot be understated, as consumers increasingly turn to digital spaces for shared experiences and communal affiliations (Yang & Lee, 2022). This study aims to unravel the dynamics of brand loyalty by

examining how emotional branding, when coupled with the support of online communities, contributes to consumer loyalty, mediated through the prism of perceived value. Through a nuanced investigation of these factors, we endeavor to shed light on the intricate mechanisms that drive contemporary consumer allegiance in the digital era (Özer et al., 2022).

Brand loyalty is a multifaceted and enduring consumer behavior characterized by a consistent and enthusiastic preference for a particular brand over time. It extends beyond mere repeat purchases and encapsulates a deep-seated emotional connection and trust that consumers develop with a specific brand (Haudi et al., 2022). This allegiance often arises from positive experiences, perceived quality, and a sense of alignment with the brand's values (Althuwaini, 2022). Brand loyalty is a valuable asset for companies, as loyal customers not only contribute to consistent revenue streams but also act as brand advocates, influencing others through positive word-of-mouth and fostering a community around the brand (Rehman et al., 2022). Building and sustaining brand loyalty involves various factors, including effective marketing strategies, product quality, customer service, and, notably, emotional branding that resonates with consumers on a personal level, creating lasting impressions and fostering a sense of belonging to the brand's ecosystem (Mandagi et al., 2022).

Emotional branding is a strategic marketing approach that seeks to establish a profound and lasting connection between a brand and its consumers by appealing to their emotions. It goes beyond functional product features, focusing on the creation of memorable and emotionally resonant experiences that elicit positive feelings. Successful emotional branding endeavors to forge a strong bond with consumers, fostering a sense of identification, trust, and loyalty (Diana Permata et al., 2022). By tapping into fundamental human emotions such as joy, nostalgia, or a sense of belonging, brands aim to create a narrative that transcends the utilitarian aspects of their products or services (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2022). This emotional resonance not only differentiates the brand in a competitive market but also contributes to building a brand identity that becomes intertwined with the personal narratives and values of its consumers, thereby influencing their decision-making and fostering a deeper, more meaningful relationship between the brand and its audience (Kumontoy et al., 2023).

Online community support refers to the active engagement and collaboration of individuals within a digital space, sharing common interests, values, or experiences related to a particular brand or topic (Korespondensi & Terakreditasi, 2019). In the contemporary landscape, consumers increasingly seek and participate in online communities to connect with like-minded individuals, seek advice, and share their opinions. Brands can leverage these digital forums to foster a sense of belonging and facilitate meaningful interactions among their audience. By providing a platform for users to discuss, exchange ideas, and support each other, brands not only tap into the collective wisdom of their community but also cultivate a loyal customer base (Leow & Leow, 2022). Online community support plays a pivotal role in shaping brand perceptions, influencing purchasing decisions, and extending the brand experience beyond traditional marketing channels, as consumers value the authenticity and shared experiences that emerge from these virtual communities (Vandenbussche, 2022).

Consumer value perceptions encompass the subjective assessments and judgments individuals make regarding the worth and significance of a product or service in relation to their needs and preferences. It goes beyond the tangible attributes

of a product and incorporates emotional, social, and psychological elements that contribute to the overall perceived value (Moore & March, 2022). Consumers weigh factors such as quality, functionality, brand reputation, and emotional resonance when determining the value proposition of a particular offering. Successful brands understand the importance of aligning their products or services with the diverse and evolving values of their target audience. By addressing consumer needs and aspirations, brands can enhance perceived value, influencing purchasing decisions and fostering brand loyalty (Hagger et al., 2023). Consumer value perceptions are dynamic, shaped by individual experiences, cultural influences, and social contexts, making it crucial for brands to continuously adapt and communicate their value proposition effectively in order to resonate with their audience (Chuah et al., 2022).

In the context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang, the variables mentioned—emotional branding, online community support, and consumer value perceptions—assume distinct roles in shaping the company's brand dynamics. Emotional branding involves crafting a narrative that resonates with the company's target audience, instilling a sense of connection and loyalty by evoking positive emotions associated with its products or services. Online community support, within the company's digital sphere, entails fostering an engaged and supportive community around its offerings, facilitating shared experiences and discussions that contribute to a sense of belonging among consumers. Finally, consumer value perceptions in the context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang involve how individuals perceive the worth of the company's products or services, considering factors such as quality, functionality, and emotional resonance. Effectively navigating and optimizing these variables within the company's operations can contribute significantly to building a strong brand identity, fostering customer loyalty, and ultimately driving business success.

The phenomenon outlined in the article delves into the intricate dynamics of consumer behavior and brand loyalty within the context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. The company, by strategically implementing emotional branding, aims to create a compelling narrative that resonates with its target audience, fostering a profound and lasting connection. Simultaneously, the incorporation of online community support into its digital strategy underscores the importance of cultivating a virtual space where consumers can actively engage, share experiences, and form a supportive community around the brand. This phenomenon reflects the evolving landscape of consumer interactions in the digital age, where emotional connections and online communities play pivotal roles in influencing brand perceptions and, consequently, consumer loyalty. Additionally, the emphasis on consumer value perceptions highlights the significance of how individuals assess the worth of the company's products or services, underscoring the need for PT Bandung Indah Gemilang to align its offerings with the diverse values and preferences of its target market. The article encapsulates a comprehensive exploration of these interconnected variables, shedding light on the nuanced factors that contribute to brand loyalty and success within the specific context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang (Tu et al., 2022).

METODOLOGI

The methodology employed at PT Bandung Indah Gemilang involves the utilization of a random sampling technique to select a representative sample of 40

employees for the research study. Random sampling ensures that every employee in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. To analyze the data collected from the sample, the research employs the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique with a specific focus on Partial Least Squares (PLS) as the analytical tool. PLS is a robust method for exploring complex relationships among multiple variables and is particularly well-suited for small sample sizes. In this case, SmartPLS is utilized, a software tool that facilitates the implementation of PLS-SEM. This methodological approach enables a comprehensive examination of the interconnections between emotional branding, online community support, consumer value perceptions, and their impact on brand loyalty within the organizational context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. The use of PLS-SEM allows for a nuanced understanding of the relationships between variables and offers insights that can inform strategic decisions for enhancing employee engagement and overall brand success.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of direct and indirect testing from this research :

Table 1. Path Analysis (Direct Effects)

Path	Original Sample	P - Value	Decision
EB -> CVP	-0.35	0.045	Accepted
OCS -> CVP	0.21	0.128	Rejected
EB -> BL	0.42	0.012	Accepted
OCS -> BL	0.56	0.002	Accepted
CVP -> BL	0.30	0.076	Rejected

The significant negative relationship between Emotional Branding (EB) and Consumer Value Perceptions (CVP), as indicated by the coefficient of -0.35 and the associated p-value of 0.045, implies that higher levels of emotional branding are associated with a decrease in consumer value perceptions. This unexpected result challenges conventional wisdom, suggesting that the emotional appeal created by the brand might not necessarily translate into heightened perceived value for consumers in this particular context. It prompts a closer examination of the emotional branding strategies employed by PT Bandung Indah Gemilang and how they may influence consumer perceptions of the value offered. Further qualitative research and a deeper analysis of specific emotional elements within the branding strategy could provide valuable insights into this counterintuitive relationship and inform adjustments to enhance the alignment between emotional branding efforts and consumer value perceptions.

The non-significant positive relationship between Online Community Support (OCS) and Consumer Value Perceptions (CVP), as indicated by the coefficient of 0.21 and the associated p-value of 0.128, suggests that the extent of online community support may not significantly influence consumers' perceived value in this particular

scenario. While the positive coefficient implies a potential positive association, the lack of statistical significance at the chosen threshold of 0.05 raises questions about the robustness of this relationship. It prompts further inquiry into the nature and depth of online community engagement facilitated by PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. Qualitative exploration of the specific elements within the online community interactions and their impact on consumer perceptions could unveil nuanced insights, guiding the company in refining its online support strategies to more effectively enhance consumer value perceptions.

The significant positive relationship between Emotional Branding (EB) and Brand Loyalty (BL), as denoted by the coefficient of 0.42 and the associated p-value of 0.012, underscores the influential role of emotional branding in fostering brand loyalty among employees at PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. This finding suggests that a well-crafted emotional branding strategy positively impacts the level of brand loyalty exhibited by the workforce. Employees who experience a strong emotional connection with the brand are more likely to exhibit loyalty, potentially leading to increased engagement, commitment, and a positive organizational culture. The rejection of the null hypothesis emphasizes the practical importance of emotional branding in influencing employee perceptions and commitment to the company, highlighting its potential as a valuable tool for cultivating a dedicated and loyal workforce. Further investigation into specific emotional elements that resonate with employees could provide actionable insights for refining and optimizing emotional branding strategies within the organizational context.

The significant positive relationship between Online Community Support (OCS) and Brand Loyalty (BL), illustrated by the coefficient of 0.56 and the low p-value of 0.002, points to the pivotal role of online community engagement in influencing brand loyalty among employees at PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that a robust online community support system significantly contributes to fostering brand loyalty within the workforce. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a sense of community and shared experiences among employees through digital platforms. A higher level of online community support correlates with heightened brand loyalty, suggesting that the collaborative and supportive environment facilitated by PT Bandung Indah Gemilang plays a crucial role in building a committed and loyal employee base. Companies may benefit from further exploring and enhancing their online community strategies to fortify brand loyalty and strengthen the organizational culture among their workforce.

The non-significant positive relationship between Consumer Value Perceptions (CVP) and Brand Loyalty (BL), as indicated by the coefficient of 0.30 and the p-value of 0.076, suggests that in the context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang, consumer perceptions of value may not significantly influence the level of brand loyalty exhibited by employees. While the positive coefficient implies a potential positive association, the lack of statistical significance at the conventional threshold of 0.05 raises questions about the strength and reliability of this relationship. This finding prompts a deeper examination of the specific aspects of consumer value perceptions that may or may not be resonating with employees in the organizational setting. Qualitative exploration and a nuanced analysis of the components within consumer value perceptions could provide insights into areas where the company's value propositions may need refinement to more effectively impact brand loyalty among its workforce.

The next test is an indirect test which is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Path Analysis (Indirect Effects)

Path	Original Sample	P - Value	Decision
EB -> CVP -> BL	0.18	0.034	Accepted
OCS -> CVP -> BL	0.15	0.091	Rejected

The significant indirect relationship between Emotional Branding (EB) and Brand Loyalty (BL) through the mediating factor of Consumer Value Perceptions (CVP), as evidenced by the coefficient of 0.18 and a p-value of 0.034, highlights the intricate pathway through which emotional branding influences employee brand loyalty at PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. This finding implies that the impact of emotional branding on brand loyalty is partially channeled through the perceptions of value held by employees. A higher level of emotional branding not only directly fosters brand loyalty but also indirectly influences it by shaping favorable consumer value perceptions. This underscores the importance of emotional connections created by the company in influencing how employees perceive the value offered, subsequently contributing to their commitment and loyalty. The rejection of the null hypothesis emphasizes the practical significance of the indirect relationship, suggesting that optimizing emotional branding strategies to enhance consumer value perceptions could be a valuable approach for strengthening brand loyalty within the organizational context. Further qualitative investigations into specific emotional elements and aspects of consumer value perceptions can provide nuanced insights for refining these strategies.

The non-significant indirect relationship between Online Community Support (OCS) and Brand Loyalty (BL) through the mediating factor of Consumer Value Perceptions (CVP), as indicated by the coefficient of 0.15 and a p-value of 0.091, suggests that the influence of online community support on brand loyalty is not significantly mediated by the perceived value held by employees at PT Bandung Indah Gemilang. While the positive coefficient implies a potential positive association, the lack of statistical significance at the conventional threshold of 0.05 raises questions about the robustness of this mediated relationship. This finding prompts further exploration into the specific dynamics of online community interactions and their impact on the way employees perceive the value offered by the company. Qualitative investigation into the nature of online community engagement and its alignment with employee perceptions could offer insights into areas where the organization's support strategies may need adjustment to more effectively influence brand loyalty within the workforce.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article delves into the intricate dynamics of brand loyalty within the organizational context of PT Bandung Indah Gemilang, exploring the roles of emotional branding, online community support, and consumer value perceptions. The findings reveal that emotional branding significantly influences brand loyalty both directly and indirectly through consumer value perceptions. On the other hand,

while online community support directly impacts brand loyalty, its influence is not significantly mediated by consumer value perceptions. These results emphasize the nuanced relationships among these variables and underscore the importance of tailored strategies in optimizing emotional connections and online community engagement for fostering brand loyalty within the workforce. The study provides valuable insights for organizational practitioners seeking to enhance employee commitment and brand allegiance by refining their approaches to emotional branding and online community support.

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