Jurnal Ekonomi Perusahaan
ISSN: 0854-8154 (print), 2830-1560 (online)

The interplay of brand trust and image in fostering customer loyalty: a study of Starbucks in Jakarta

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Flow:
Received: February 3, 2025
Reviewed: February 12, 2025
Accepted: February 19, 2025
Published: February 21, 2025

Keywords:
brand trust, brand image, brand loyalty, consumer behavior, Starbucks

How to cite:
Ferdyani, J., Setianingsih, R. E., & Dema, Y. (2025). The interplay of brand trust and image in fostering customer loyalty: a study of Starbucks in Jakart. *Jurnal Ekonomi Perusahaan*, *31*(2), 175-186
https://doi.org/10.46806/jep.v31i2.1351

ABSTRACT

In the high-stakes world of Jakarta's bustling coffee scene, Starbucks faces a relentless challenge: how to navigate the intricate interplay between brand trust, brand image, and customer loyalty. This research dives deep into this dynamic, exploring how these key elements converge to shape consumer loyalty in a market where global forces and local factors collide. Employing a robust quantitative approach, the study uncovers the powerful roles both brand trust and brand image play in driving brand loyalty, with brand image emerging as the dominant force. While trust lays the groundwork by mitigating perceived risks, it is the brand's image—the emotional connections it fosters, the exclusivity it promises, and the distinct identity it carves—that truly propels loyalty in Jakarta's fiercely competitive market. The findings serve as a wake-up call for Starbucks: to thrive in this ever-evolving landscape, the brand must master the art of managing not only trust but also its image, weaving both elements into a cohesive strategy that strengthens long-term customer loyalty. This research sheds light on how brands can harness the dual power of trust and image to cultivate deep, lasting consumer commitment in emerging markets, driving sustained success in a world where competition is ever-accelerating.

INTRODUCTION

In the fiercely competitive landscape of global coffee culture, a seismic shift is underway, shaking the foundations of Starbucks' brand loyalty. The tension? A complex web of political conflicts, with the Palestine-Israel situation casting a shadow over the brand's image. The #BoycottStarbucks movement has surged across the globe, gaining considerable momentum on platforms like X, where consumers are vocalizing their disapproval of the brand's perceived involvement in contentious issues. This shift is not just an abstract debate—it's a tangible threat. For instance, 66% of coffee drinkers in Indonesia are now flocking to local cafes, a warning signal to international giants like Starbucks (GoodStats, 2024). Meanwhile, data from Sprout Social reveals a fascinating twist: 70% of consumers demand that brands take a stand on socio-political matters, further complicating the calculus of brand perception and loyalty (Forbes, 2021). Despite Starbucks' powerful marketing strategies and environmental commitments, its image is suffering, with a 4% drop in customer loyalty, underscoring the critical need for brands to navigate the delicate terrain of global politics (Kompas.id, 2024).

However, a significant gap lingers in existing research—one that this study aims to fill. While literature has explored general brand loyalty and trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and the impact of social media on brand perceptions (Hudson et al., 2016), there's an absence of in-depth exploration of the role of political movements like Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in emerging markets like Indonesia. With the rise of online platforms amplifying political discourse (Muntinga et al., 2011), the influence of social media on brand image is more potent than previously recognized, especially for global brands entangled in political controversies. This research will illuminate the underexplored relationship between external political factors, brand trust, and loyalty, providing a deeper understanding of how these dynamics unfold in politically sensitive regions.

To understand these complex interactions, this study draws on the theoretical lenses of **Consumer Brand Relationship Theory (CBR)** and **Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**. CBR, as conceptualized by Fournier (1998), likens the bond between consumers and brands to interpersonal relationships, where trust and image are pivotal to cultivating loyalty. Brand trust, defined as consumers' confidence in a brand's consistency and ability to deliver on promises (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), serves as the cornerstone for loyalty. Complementing this, TPB (Ajzen, 1991) expands the lens, emphasizing how external socio-political influences—like the BDS movement—reshape consumer attitudes and behaviors. These frameworks will guide an investigation into how brand trust and image interact with political forces to influence consumer loyalty, especially in regions where political awareness and social media usage are pronounced.

The aim of this research is to explore the intricate dance between brand trust, image, and loyalty among Starbucks consumers in Jakarta, focusing particularly on how the Palestine-Israel conflict and the BDS movement affect consumer perceptions and behavior. By examining the interaction between these elements through the lenses of CBR and TPB, this study seeks to shed light on how political affiliations, brand perceptions, and social media influence consumer loyalty, offering valuable insights for brands navigating these volatile terrains in emerging markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Brand Relationship Theory

Consumer Brand Relationship Theory (CBR), pioneered by Fournier (1998), posits that the bond between consumers and brands mirrors interpersonal relationships, with trust and emotional attachment being central to fostering loyalty. This theory suggests that consumers perceive brands not merely as products but as partners with whom they form deep, emotional connections. These relationships, which range from casual to intimate, are influenced by how well the brand meets consumers' needs and desires, similar to human relationships. Brand loyalty is driven by these emotional bonds, which go beyond transactional exchanges and build long-lasting consumer commitment (Fournier, 1998; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). According to CBR, the more a brand fosters trust and emotional resonance, the more likely it is to sustain loyalty.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) expands on the idea that consumer behavior is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory explains how individuals' behavior, including brand loyalty, is influenced by their attitudes toward the brand, social pressures to engage with it, and their belief in their ability to remain loyal. In the case of Starbucks, political movements like BDS may impact attitudes and social norms, altering how consumers perceive the brand's role in global issues. TPB suggests that loyalty is not only a result of brand trust and image but is also contingent on how consumers perceive external influences, such as the political landscape, which may reinforce or challenge their loyalty toward a brand (Ajzen, 1991; Conner & Armitage, 1998).

Brand Resonance Theory

Keller's Brand Resonance Theory (2003) highlights how emotional connections between consumers and brands lead to brand loyalty. This theory suggests that brands build loyalty by moving through stages of brand development, including brand identity, meaning, responses, and ultimately, resonance. A positive brand image plays a pivotal role in this process, as it shapes consumers' perceptions and emotions. The theory emphasizes the importance of creating strong brand associations and fostering a deep emotional bond with the target audience, ultimately resulting in high levels of loyalty and brand advocacy. Brands that resonate deeply with consumers are more likely to cultivate long-term loyalty, making brand image a crucial element in sustaining competitive advantages.

Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's ability to fulfill its promises and deliver quality consistently. Arnida et al. (2022) and Tjiptono (2014) stress that trust is crucial for overcoming consumer skepticism and driving brand loyalty. Trust is built through consistent product quality, transparent communication, and ethical business practices. When consumers trust a brand, they are more likely to overlook risks and engage in repeat purchasing. In the context of Starbucks, brand trust is particularly significant as the company navigates complex political issues, which may challenge consumer perceptions of its values and commitments. The trust consumers place in Starbucks will determine their willingness to continue supporting the brand despite external pressures.

Brand Image

Brand image encompasses the overall perceptions and emotions consumers associate with a brand. It is shaped by a combination of marketing efforts, consumer experiences, and social influence. Clow and Baack (2022) and Kristianto (2022) explain that brand image is a key driver of consumer behavior, influencing perceptions of reliability, social status, and the brand's alignment with consumer values. For Starbucks, a strong brand image can enhance consumer loyalty by creating a distinctive identity that resonates emotionally with consumers. In politically sensitive contexts, a brand's image becomes particularly important, as consumers may decide to support or avoid a brand based on its perceived alignment with social and political causes.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is characterized by repeated consumer purchases and a preference for a specific brand over its competitors. It is a reflection of the strength of the consumer-brand relationship and is influenced by trust, satisfaction, and emotional connections. Rubio et al. (2019) and Clow and Baack (2022) emphasize that brand loyalty goes beyond transactional exchanges, involving deeper emotional attachment and a strong preference for the brand. In the case of Starbucks, brand loyalty is crucial in a competitive market like Jakarta, where local cafes pose a growing threat. A strong brand image and trust, combined with positive experiences, are key to maintaining and strengthening customer loyalty.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The Influence of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

Brand trust is the bedrock upon which consumer loyalty is built—an invisible thread of confidence consumers place in a brand, founded on their belief that the brand will reliably meet their expectations and stay true to its core values (Arnida et al., 2022). This trust creates a sense of security, a comforting assurance that fosters repeat purchases and keeps customers tethered, despite the allure of alternative options. Rubio et al. (2019) paint brand loyalty as a powerful, repeated pattern of consumer behavior—an unwavering commitment sparked by a robust internal disposition. This commitment is influenced by myriad factors, from the avoidance of risk to the weight of the brand's reputation, the availability of substitutes, and the sway of peer recommendations. At the heart of this dynamic lies the *Consumer Brand Relationship Theory* (Fournier, 1998), which asserts that brand trust forms the cornerstone of emotional connections with consumers, amplifying their loyalty. Trust not only quashes perceived risks but also bolsters the brand's reputation and amplifies social influence, sparking deeper loyalty. Marrying this idea with the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991), we see how brand trust not only shapes attitudes but actively directs consumer behavior, especially in mitigating risks and driving repeat purchases. Therefore, brand trust is the bedrock of loyalty, influencing how consumers react and respond to external forces.

H1: Brand trust positively influences brand loyalty.

The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Loyalty

Brand image, a rich tapestry of consumer perception, emerges from the whispers of personal experience and the powerful sway of a brand's reputation (Kristianto, 2022). This image is sculpted over time—whether through firsthand interactions or hearsay about the brand's legacy. A robust brand image is not a fleeting impression; it sticks, a memory ingrained in the minds of consumers, ultimately guiding their choices when faced with alternatives. As Clow & Baack (2022) assert, brand loyalty manifests when consumers consistently opt for one brand over all others, casting aside price considerations. This loyalty grows not just from transactional exchanges but from deep emotional bonds with the brand. According to *Brand Resonance Theory* (Keller, 2003), brand image is the very force that fortifies these emotional bonds, enhancing loyalty by motivating repeat purchases. A compelling brand image doesn't just foster satisfaction—it ignites lasting emotional connections and drives the consumer back to the brand again and again. The strength of this bond transcends functional utility, anchoring the consumer in an intimate relationship with the brand.

H2: Brand image positively influences brand loyalty.

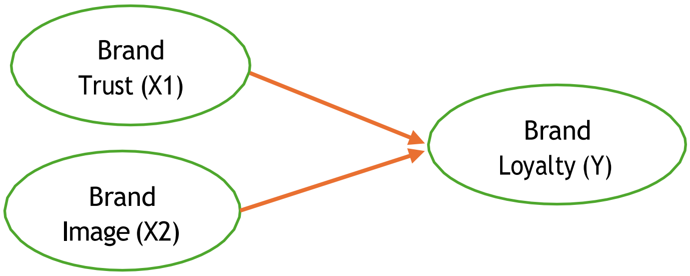

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This research sets out to explore the profound influence of brand trust and brand image on brand loyalty, specifically among Starbucks customers in Jakarta. The study adopts a purposive sampling strategy, selecting participants who meet precise criteria—the crucial requirement being that they have visited a Starbucks outlet at least once. This sampling method is ideal for handpicking a group that directly aligns with the research's aims, ensuring relevance and specificity in the findings. Guided by the standards outlined by Hair et al. (2019), the sample size is meticulously calculated by factoring in the dataset's total size, the case-to-variable ratio, and the power of factor analysis. According to recommended practices, factor analysis should involve a sample of no less than 50 observations, with an optimal number of 100 to achieve robust results. The commonly accepted case- to-variable ratio further suggests five observations per variable, but a more ideal 10:1 ratio is deemed even more reliable.

In this case, the minimum sample size is derived by multiplying the number of questionnaire items (16) by a factor of 5, yielding 80 respondents. However, to guarantee the highest level of analysis integrity, the total sample size is elevated to 100 respondents, ensuring a robust, statistically reliable foundation for examining how brand trust and brand image shape brand loyalty. Data collection will be conducted via surveys, using descriptive statistical methods to identify and analyze trends and relationships between key variables. Classical assumption tests—including normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests—will be meticulously performed to validate the regression model, ensuring that the findings are not only accurate but also deeply insightful. Through these rigorous processes, the study aims to offer a rich, detailed understanding of the factors driving brand loyalty among Jakarta's Starbucks clientele.

RESULT

Validity and Reliability Test

The results of the validity and reliability tests for the variables measuring brand trust, brand image, and brand loyalty reveal strong support for the constructs. All variables—brand trust, brand image, and brand loyalty—showed product moment correlation values that exceed the critical threshold of 0.361, confirming that the items used to measure these constructs are valid and capture the intended concepts accurately. Specifically, the Pearson's correlation coefficients for each variable demonstrate solid validity, ensuring that the items reliably represent their respective constructs. In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha values for brand trust (0.706), brand image (0.740), and brand loyalty (0.864) all exceed the minimum threshold of 0.700, indicating that the measurement scales exhibit high internal consistency. These results suggest that the instruments used to evaluate the core variables in this study are both valid and reliable, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis.

Table 1. Validity & Reliability Test

Descriptions	Brand Trust	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty
Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients	ove 0.361	ove 0.361	ove 0.361
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.706	0.740	0.864

Respondents’ Characteristics

The respondent characteristics in this study provide valuable insights into the demographics of Starbucks customers in Jakarta. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 54% male and 46% female participants. A majority of the respondents (63%) fall within the age range of 17 to 25 years, while the remaining respondents are distributed across older age groups. Occupation-wise, the largest proportion of respondents are students (32%), followed by private employees (29%). Other occupational groups include entrepreneurs (12%), professionals (4%), and public servants (4%). These characteristics suggest that the sample primarily represents younger, student-oriented consumers with diverse professional backgrounds, offering a snapshot of the varied demographic profile of Starbucks customers in Jakarta.

Tabel 2. Respondents' Characteristics

Charateristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	54	54%
	Female	46	46%
Age	17-25 y.o.	63	63%
	26-34 y.o.	18	18%
	35-43 y.o.	5	5%
	>43 y.o.	14	14%
Occupation	Students	32	32%
	Public servants	4	4%
	Private employees	29	29%
	Entrepreneurs	12	12%
	Professionals	4	4%
	Others	19	19%

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for brand trust, brand image, and brand loyalty reveal the following: Brand trust has a mean score of 4.33, suggesting a high level of consumer trust in the Starbucks brand. Brand image also scores well, with a mean of 4.21, indicating a generally positive perception of Starbucks' image. However, brand loyalty has a slightly lower mean score of 3.75, pointing to moderate consumer loyalty. These results suggest that while Starbucks enjoys strong brand trust and image, there is potential to further enhance brand loyalty.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptions	Brand Trust	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty
Mean	4.33	4.21	3.75

Classical Assumption Test

The classical assumption tests demonstrate that the data satisfies the necessary criteria for regression analysis. The normality test shows a significance value of 0.060, indicating that the data is normally distributed. The multicollinearity test reveals tolerance values of 0.608 and VIF values of 1.645 for brand trust and brand image, respectively, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Heteroscedasticity tests for both variables yield significance values of 0.121 and 0.335, confirming the absence of heteroscedasticity. These findings suggest that the data is well-suited for regression analysis.

Table 4. Classical Assumption Test

Assumption Testing	Requirment	Testing Output
Normality	P-value $\geq$ 0.05	0.060
Multicollinearity	VIF < 10	Tolerance = 0.608
	Tol > 0.1	VIF = 1.645
Heteroscedascity	P-value $\geq$ 0.05	0.121 & 0.335

Model and Hypothesis Testing

The ANOVA test results indicate that the regression model is a good fit for the data, with an F- value of 23.408 and a significance level of 0.000, confirming that the independent variables (brand trust and brand image) significantly affect brand loyalty.

The R^2 value of 0.326 shows that 32.6% of the variance in brand loyalty is explained by the model, highlighting the influence of brand trust and brand image on consumer loyalty.

Table 5. Regression Outputs

Testing	**Requirement**	**Testing Output**	
	-	0.326	
F-test	P-value < 0.05	F = 23.408 & Sig. = 0.000	
t-testing		Beta	P-value
Brand Trust	Sig < 0.05	0.178	0.085
Brand Image	Sig < 0.05	0.321	0.000

The t-test results provide further insights into the relationship between the variables. For brand trust, the t-value of 1.741 and a p-value of 0.0425 (after adjustment) indicate a positive but modest effect on brand loyalty. Brand image, on the other hand, has a more substantial impact, with a t-value of 4.070 and a significance value of 0.000, strongly supporting the hypothesis that brand image positively influences brand loyalty. The standardized beta coefficient for brand image (0.435) confirms its stronger influence on brand loyalty compared to brand trust, emphasizing the dominant role of brand image in fostering consumer loyalty.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

This research set out to unveil the delicate and fascinating dance between brand trust and brand loyalty. The hypothesis boldly proposed that brand trust would wield a positive influence on brand loyalty. As anticipated, the results reveal that brand trust does indeed ignite a spark of loyalty, though the flame it kindles is not as blazing as expected when compared to other elements, notably brand image. This discovery throws a curveball to the conventional wisdom that brand trust reigns supreme in the loyalty game. While trust is undeniably a pillar that supports customer loyalty, the research suggests that other factors—such as the brand's image—might just steal the show in creating a deeper, more enduring connection with consumers.

The findings confirm the modest yet significant role of brand trust in fostering loyalty, resonating with Consumer Brand Relationship Theory (Fournier, 1998), which champions trust as the key to emotional bonds and sustained loyalty. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), brand trust influences consumer attitudes and behaviors by reducing perceived risks and shaping positive intentions. However, the results reveal that trust alone isn’t enough to secure unwavering loyalty—brand image must step in and play its part. When trust is bolstered by a positive brand image and emotional resonance, loyalty flourishes. This study challenges earlier research by suggesting that brand trust, while essential, needs the strong emotional pull of a well-crafted brand image to fuel long-term loyalty.

In contrast to past studies that positioned brand trust as the be-all and end-all (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester, 2004), this research introduces a fresh perspective: trust, though crucial, exerts a more modest influence on loyalty. This research, through its integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior, provides a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the link between brand trust and loyalty. The real breakthrough here lies in the interplay between brand trust and brand image, where both need to be in sync to truly drive loyalty. Starbucks, in light of these findings, must focus on enhancing its brand trust through consistent service quality and transparent communication, all while aligning this effort with strategies that deepen emotional bonds with customers— experiences that are unforgettable, personalized, and truly engaging. Addressing local consumer expectations swiftly and reinforcing the brand's reliability will make all the difference in nurturing long-term loyalty in a market as competitive as Jakarta.

The Influence of Brand Image on Brand Loyalty

The research set out to probe the intricate, often underappreciated, force that is brand image, hypothesizing that it would pack a powerful punch when it comes to driving brand loyalty. And did it ever! The results didn't just support the hypothesis—they emphatically validated it. The research shows that brand image doesn't just influence loyalty; it seems to *fuel* it, shaping consumer perceptions, emotions, and behavior in ways that leave an indelible mark on their commitment to the brand. It's clear: a brand's image, from its unique positioning to its social impact, has a massive impact on consumer loyalty. This finding underscores that brands need to not only be visually compelling but emotionally resonant to win and maintain consumer devotion.

Brand Resonance Theory (Keller, 2003) takes the spotlight here, supporting the notion that a strong brand image, one that sparks emotional connections with consumers, creates fierce loyalty. When consumers perceive a brand as unique, fulfilling both emotional and functional needs, their bond deepens, and loyalty follows. Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1997) reinforces this—through a well-crafted brand image, associations, and customer experiences, trust and commitment are cultivated. But brand image is more than just reputation; it's the emotional tug that drives long-term attachment and advocacy. This research brings a revolutionary insight: the emotional bonds formed through positive brand perceptions—stronger than just trust—are the true catalyst for consumer loyalty.

What's even more interesting is how this research breaks away from the conventional wisdom. While prior studies have often weighed brand trust and image equally, this study shows that brand image carries more weight in fostering loyalty. Why? Because emotional connections, exclusivity, and social contributions resonate more deeply and quickly with consumers than trust alone. The novelty lies in this shift: brand image reigns supreme. And that, according to Keller's Brand Resonance Theory, is the ultimate game-changer in customer loyalty.

So, what does this mean for Starbucks in Jakarta? Well, they'd be wise to pour their energy into enhancing their brand image. Given the dominance of brand image in driving loyalty (Keller, 2003), Starbucks should focus on differentiating its brand through innovation, local cultural relevance, and meaningful social contributions. Starbucks must be not only a symbol of quality but a brand that actively engages with local issues, resonates with consumer values, and offers an experience that embodies its core identity. A strong brand image isn't just a luxury—it's the foundation of long-term loyalty. And with this in mind, Starbucks must continuously stay attuned to shifting consumer preferences, ensuring its image evolves while maintaining its connection to Jakarta's ever-changing social and cultural landscape. Only then will the bond between Starbucks and its consumers truly solidify, resulting in sustained brand loyalty.

CONCLUSION

While brand trust undeniably plays a positive role in nurturing loyalty, its impact is far less formidable than commonly believed, especially when compared to the powerhouse that is brand image. In a world where trust has always been the golden ticket to consumer loyalty, this study uncovers an astonishing truth—brand image, with its allure of exclusivity, glowing reputation, and social consciousness, dominates the loyalty equation. This shift challenges the status quo of brand management, suggesting that businesses should pivot towards creating a magnetic, emotionally resonant brand image, rather than clinging to trust alone as their loyalty driver. In today's fiercely competitive market, the power lies not just in fulfilling promises, but in connecting deeply with consumers through the image they associate with your brand.

The theories and methods wielded in this research are nothing short of precision instruments. By weaving together Consumer Brand Relationship Theory (Fournier, 1998), the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and Brand Resonance Theory (Keller, 2003), this study carved a path to unravel how trust, image, and emotional bonds weave into the fabric of brand loyalty. These theories didn't just illuminate the relationship—they provided a solid framework to understand the forces at play in consumer behavior. Coupled with a robust quantitative approach, this research offers finely tuned insights into how these elements interlace, confirming that the methodology and theoretical approach are perfectly aligned with the research questions.

The use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to capture the fluidity of consumer loyalty and perception over time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Consumer behavior evolves with shifting tides, and a snapshot in time fails to account for this dynamism. The research also centers exclusively on Starbucks customers in Jakarta, narrowing the generalizability of the findings to other regions or market segments (Saunders et al., 2019). Finally, the reliance on self-reported survey data introduces the potential for biases, such as social desirability or selective recall, to skew the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Moving forward, future studies could strengthen the validity and breadth of these insights by utilizing longitudinal designs and more diverse samples, thus deepening our understanding of how brand trust and image shape consumer loyalty in ever-changing markets.

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