



BRAND REPUTATION ANALYSIS BASED ON BRAND EXPERIENCE VARIABLES AND BRAND POSITIONING CONSISTENCY: A STUDY ON MOTORCYCLE BRANDS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Managing brand reputation is a long journey that requires consistency. This study aims to determine how to build a brand reputation based on the influence of brand experience variables and brand positioning consistency. This study is a quantitative study to test the hypothesis. The respondents of this study were Yamaha, Honda and Suzuki motorcycle users. The number of respondents was 414. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed through social media. The study results showed that brand experience had the most significant influence, with a regression coefficient of 1.619, and its impact was considerable. At the same time, brand positioning consistency was also substantial, with a significant influence of 0.169. The results of the study add managerial insight into building brand reputation.

Keyword: Brand Reputation, Brand Experience, Brand Positioning, Motorcycle Brands in Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

A brand is a product characteristic that identifies the product and differentiates it from other product brands. Managing a brand is quite complex and requires serious effort. Brand reputation can also be a tool for differentiating from competing brands. Brand reputation can provide awareness, perceived quality, specific mental associations, uncertainty reduction, and customer loyalty in the customer purchasing process. Existing research on brand reputation shows a positive linear effect on customer purchasing behaviour (Mu & Zhang, 2021). Building a brand reputation takes a long time (Vuong & Bui, 2023). Consistency of performance in the long term will help create a brand reputation. Consistency is critical to convey integrated communication of a coherent brand identity to stakeholders, which allows brand image and reputation to be aligned. A consistent approach is essential (Chung & Byrom, 2021). A good brand reputation will help consumers in making purchasing decisions (Wang et al., 2021). However, building a brand reputation is not easy for all companies. Many companies have difficulty building a brand reputation. Many organizations face challenges convincing both external (e.g., potential customers) and internal (e.g., employees) audiences about their actions and messages, especially when they have messages with multiple objectives aimed at different audiences, and they want their messages to be persuasive and compelling. It becomes even more challenging to use a single voice when expressing (or suppressing) multiple voices, identities, cultures, interests, and internal images (Avidar, 2021). In the past, many companies faced difficulties underlining their brands through conventional advertising and connecting with customers. To meet consumer expectations, brands must maintain performance and provide the desired product with the best quality available (Reeya Shrestha, 2021).

In the motorcycle industry in Indonesia, the reputation of brands varies. Some brands have a powerful reputation as motorbikes with speed performance on the road, such as the Yamaha brand

(Edwin Sugesti Nasution & Muammar Rinaldi, 2021). The Honda brand is known for its reputation for being fuel efficient (Tawaf et al., 2022) and having a tough engine (Produk et al., 2021). However, there are motorcycle brands that have less clear reputations, such as the Suzuki brand. Since its presence in Indonesia, this brand has not shown a clear reputation in the public eye. There is even an assessment that Suzuki motorcycle fuel consumption tends to be wasteful compared to others (Naufal et al., 2015). Suzuki motorcycle sales performance in Indonesia also occupies a low position with only 0.36% of the market share in 2022, while Honda controls a market share of more than 77% and Yamaha more than 20% (Raihan, 2022).

Research on brand reputation has been widely conducted. Brand reputation is influenced by brand suitability with consumers and celebrity endorsers (Arora et al., 2021). Other studies show that corporate social responsibility is essential in building brand reputation (Vuong & Bui, 2023). Reputation is also related to brand positioning, namely that brand differentiation can be the basis for brand positioning, and differentiation shows the authenticity or originality of the brand (Shams, 2015). Other studies show that the reputation demonstrated by the Company's culture and visual identity is precisely the basis for positioning (Karnaukhova & Polyanskaya, 2016). The difference in the direction of this relationship shows that the positioning of brand reputation with brand positioning is unclear, whether it is an influencing variable or an influenced variable. In this study, brand reputation will be positioned as an independent variable with the argument that brand positioning carried out through consistent communication in the long term will build a strong brand reputation. Another variable that is not related is brand experience with brand reputation. Until now, after searching on Google Scholar, no research links brand experience with brand reputation. Thus, there is a theoretical gap regarding the relationship between brand experience and brand positioning with brand reputation. Therefore, this study will reveal how brand experience and positioning influence brand reputation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Reputation and Brand Experience

Brand reputation is a holistic impression of what stakeholders think, feel, and talk about a brand. This is usually caused by brand events that affect the Company's financial performance. This definition has the following characteristics: 1) concerns all stakeholders (current and potential customers, employees, partners, and investors), not just current or potential customers, 2) has components of thinking, feeling, and talking (not just knowledge about the brand), 3) can reflect actual brand events (e.g., controllable marketing activities or uncontrollable public events about the brand), and 4) is connected to the Company's financial performance (Rust et al., 2021).

We highlight "stakeholders" to indicate a broader view of customers, which is an integration of corporate reputation and marketing literature. This view is customer-centric, but broader, considering

all stakeholders as customers, including current customers (e.g., current and former customers), potential customers (e.g., competitors' customers and noncustomers), internal customers (e.g., employees), and external customers (e.g., investors and partners). For example, Berry (2000) considers both external customers and internal employees relevant to building service brand equity. (Hanssens et al., 2009) also urge the need to take a broader view of marketing strategy stakeholders by including the investor community as customers. Emotional word-of-mouth on social media influences investors' decisions to hold Company shares (Nguyen et al., 2020). This broader view of customers reflects that brand reputation can be perceived by non-relationship brand stakeholders, which can affect the brand's financial performance.

Brand reputation should be based on whatever stakeholders say about a brand, meaning what is explicitly expressed about their thoughts and feelings, not what is implicitly inferred. Stakeholders on social media can talk about anything related to a brand. It can be a brand experience, an opinion about a brand event, or a personal sentiment. It can be positive, neutral, or harmful to varying degrees. The overall impression of a brand can be summarised by what stakeholders say about a brand on social media (Hewett et al., 2016). Changes in brand reputation are usually the result of actual brand events. These brand events can be controllable marketing actions and activities, and uncontrollable public events about the brand. This characteristic emphasizes the actionability of brand reputation, allowing marketers to manage and track reputation for risk and crisis management actively. Such actionability is the focus of the return on marketing model (Rust et al., 2004). Brand reputation must be value-relevant and connected to the Company's financial performance. This value relevance reflects investors' expectations about the financial value of current, external, and potential customers to the Company. A value-relevant brand reputation is a company asset and a driver of the Company's financial performance, as defined in the management literature (Ferguson et al., 2000). Brand experience is the sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses elicited by brand-related stimuli that are part of the brand's design, identity, packaging, communications, and environment. The authors distinguish several dimensions of experience and construct a brand experience scale that includes four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural. In six studies, the authors show that the scale is reliable, valid, and distinct from other brand measures, including brand evaluation, involvement, attachment, customer delight, and personality. In addition, brand experience influences consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality associations (Brakus et al., 2009).

Most research on experience has focused on utilitarian product attributes and category experiences, rather than on the experiences delivered by brands. Consumers are exposed to utilitarian product attributes when they search for, shop for, and consume brands. However, they are also exposed to a variety of brand-specific stimuli, such as brand-identifying colours (Gorn et al., 1997), typography, background design elements (Mandel & Johnson, 2002), slogans, mascots, and brand

characters (Keller, 1987). These brand-related stimuli appear as part of the brand's design and identity (e.g., name, logo, signage), packaging, and marketing communications (e.g., advertising, brochures, websites) and in the environments in which the brand is marketed or sold (e.g., stores, events). These brand-related stimuli are a significant source of consumers' subjective internal responses, referred to as "brand experiences" (Brakus et al., 2009).

Reputation is a major contributor to the perceived quality of products bearing a brand name. Consumers expect that products produced today have the same quality as products produced in the past, because the brand adds credibility (Milewicz & Herbig, 1994). Individuals form positive views only for brands that they consider credible. They assess incomplete brand information collected over time, and companies must try to project a consistent message to secure a good reputation (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009a). Consumer brand experience influences brand credibility, indicating a long-term brand reputation (Dwivedi et al., 2018). Hypothesis 1: Brand experience influences Brand Reputation.

Consistency of Brand Positioning and Brand Reputation

Brand positioning does not focus on products, either physical products or services, but is related to how to change the way consumers view brands or companies (Karnauchova & Polyanskaya, 2015). Positioning embedded in the minds of consumers is the result of a marketing strategy, so that the product brand occupies a precise positioning in the minds of consumers. Thus, brand positioning efforts are how producers of a product brand can have a competitive advantage. (Ahmed & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2020). Strong and different positioning that competing brands cannot imitate will be an advantage and become a valuable asset for the Company. (Iyer et al., 2019). Positioning is a fundamental tool in a company's design of a competitive advantage strategy (Ahmed & Rodríguez-Díaz, 2020). Reputation is an impression formed from accumulating images that exist in the perception of constituents through a long process. The image formed is a company's strategic effort carried out consistently over time. (Argenti et al., 2000). Brand reputation is a strong impression embedded in the minds of consumers and other parties formed over a long period, and the impression is consistent. Reputation can reduce uncertainty about the Company's future performance. Brand and company reputation can be damaging or optimistic. A positive reputation will help companies and brands attract many customers. Conversely, a negative reputation will cause companies to lose customers (Barros et al., 2020; Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009b). Research on the relationship between brand positioning and brand reputation was conducted by Bartikowski et.al., who measured positioning with three strategies, namely local, foreign and global brand positioning. Brand positioning that uses a local (nationalistic) strategy for foreign luxury product brands has a greater influence on brand reputation than foreign and global positioning strategies. (Bartikowski et al., 2021). Advertising can form a specific brand positioning to build a reputation by showing fundamental differences from competing brands.

Consistent brand positioning efforts through advertising will help to shape brand reputation (Mahboobi Renani et al., 2020). In a broader perspective, it has been found that consistent integrated marketing communications (advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, events and experiences, direct marketing, public relations, and word of mouth) have a positive effect on brand positioning (Mahboobi Renani et al., 2020). In brand positioning communications, message consistency is important in building a reputation. Message consistency is the similarity of message content received by viewers from different media and promotional tools. (Castañeda-García et al., 2020). Lastly, building brand reputation results from consistent positioning efforts, such as the coherence of message content and exposure media, which are carried out over time (Singh et al., 2014).

Hypothesis 2: Consistency in brand positioning, which includes consistency in message content, exposure media, and execution over time, has a positive effect on brand reputation.

Model of Research

From the theoretical description above, a model of the relationship between independent and dependent variables can be made. The independent variables are brand experience and consistency of brand positioning, while the dependent variable is brand reputation.

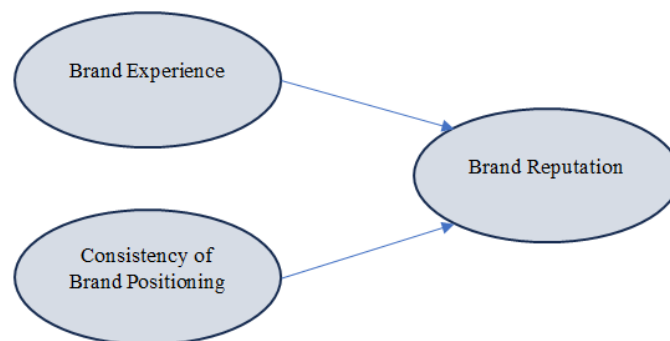


Figure 1: Model of Research

METHOD

This research is a quantitative study that attempts to test the hypothesis that has been proposed. This research involved 414 respondents who are motorcycle users in Indonesia. The motorcycle brands that are the objects of the research are Yamaha, Honda and Suzuki. Data were collected using a questionnaire that had been prepared using a construct approach, namely, the questionnaire was developed based on the theory of each research variable. The questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents using the social media platform WhatsApp. The respondent criteria were anyone with one or all three brands that were the objects of the research.

The data analysis method used was multiple linear regression analysis with the following stages: (1) the data that had been collected was then tabulated; (2) the data was analyzed using SPSS

software; (3) the data analysis process was carried out with descriptive analysis to find out the big picture regarding the characteristics of the respondents; (3) the next stage was to conduct regression analysis and test the regression assumptions. The regression assumptions tested were the normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents are male. The respondents' jobs are mostly workers (55.5%), followed by office staff (19.8%), entrepreneurs (10.4%), professionals (8.7%) and managers (5.8%). The respondents' education is mostly S1 (46.9%), followed by high school (34.5%), less than high school (13.5%) and Diploma (5.1%). The respondents' income is mostly below five million (64.0%), followed by income between five million and ten million rupiah (26.8%) and those with income more than ten million rupiah by 9.2%.

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frekuensi	Percent
Gender	Man	231	55,8
	Woman	183	44,2
Work	Worker	229	55,3
	Staff kantor	82	19,8
	Professional	36	8,7
	Managerial	24	5,8
	Entrepreneur	40	10,4
Education	< high school	56	13,5
	High school	143	34,5
	Diploma	21	5,1
	S1	194	46,9
Income	< 5.000.000,-	265	64,0
	5.000.000,- s/d 10.000.000,-	111	26,8
	> 10.000.000,-	38	9,2

Regression analysis

The regression analysis is intended to determine the magnitude of the influence of the Brand Positioning Consistency variable on brand reputation. In addition, it is also used to determine the influence of brand experience on brand reputation. Here are the results of the double linear regression analysis:

Table 2 Regression Coefficients

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	18.866	2.016		9.356	.000		
	Brand Experience	1.619	.170	.460	9.536	.000	.666	1.500

Consistency Of Brand Positioning	.169	.031	.267	5.534	.000	.666	1.500
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a. Dependent Variable: Brand Reputation

Table 2 shows that the influence of brand experience on 1.619 and the effect of brand positioning consistency is 0.169. The resulting regression model is as follows:

$$Y = 18.866 + 1.619X_1 + 0.169X_2$$

Y = brand reputation; X₁ = Brand Experience; X₂ = Consistency of Brand Positioning.

Testing Regression Assumptions

To ascertain whether or not the regression model produced is appropriate for analysing the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, regression assumption testing is required, namely normality tests, multicollinearity tests, and heteroskedasticity tests. The normality test used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and the results stated that the study data were normally distributed, as seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Data Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N	375	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	5.34394495
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.056
	Positive	.052
	Negative	-.056
Test Statistic	.056	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.007 ^c	
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		

Next is the test of multicollinearity, which is a test to determine whether the independent variables are correlated. The assumption in regression that must be fulfilled is that there should be no correlation between independent variables. The test criteria used the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) criterion, which states no multicollinearity if the VIF value is less than 10. From Table 1 above, the VIF value for brand experience and consistency of brand composition is 1.5 each.

The last regression assumption test is the heteroskedasticity test. It tests the absence of a pattern of residuals by plotting the standard residual and the standard prediction value. It is said that heteroskedasticity does not occur if the plot image does not form a certain pattern. Figure 2 shows that heteroscedasticity does not occur, and therefore, all regression assumptions are met.

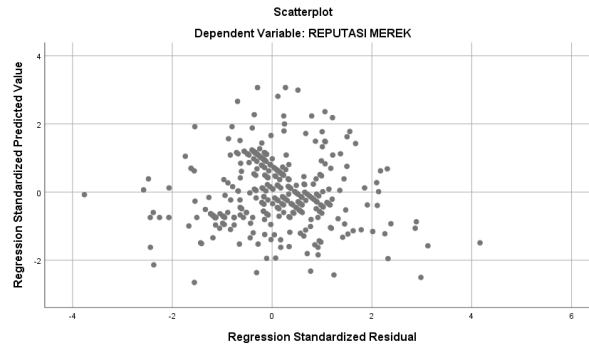


Figure 2 Heteroscedasticity Test

Pengujian Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing is carried out by comparing the probability of error value (P-value) with the acceptable alpha error rate. In this study, the alpha error was 5%. Table 4 is the following hypothesis test results:

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing

No.	Hipotesis	t-value	P-value (sig)	Conclusion
1.	Brand Experience → Brand Reputation	9,536	0,000	Accepted
2.	Consistency of Brand Positioning → Brand Reputation	9,534	0,000	Accepted

Discussion

The first hypothesis test shows that brand experience is important in improving brand reputation. This shows that brand experience in the form of five sensory experiences: affective experience, intellectual experience, and behavioural experience, which are drivers of brand reputation. This research aligns with Dwivedi et al. (2018) and Veloutsou & Moutinho (2009a).

The second hypothesis test concluded that the consistency of brand positioning plays an important role in improving brand reputation. This research shows that consistency in brand positioning is critical in efforts to build brand reputation. The coherence of message content that highlights functional and emotional advantages will be embedded in the minds of consumers. For example, Yamaha tries to build a consistent message content by highlighting technical advantages in the form of speed with the tagline: Yamaha is getting ahead. Likewise, other motorcycle brands try to instil a unique impression in the minds of consumers so that consumers remember the brands offered. Another consistency is that the message must always be delivered at all times, and lastly, the content of the message must be consistent across all promotional media used. This stinging aligns with research (Castañeda-García et al., 2020; Mahboobi Renani et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Building a brand reputation takes a long time and requires consistency in brand positioning, ranging from consistency in message content to use of promotional media. Companies trying to build

brand reputation need to make these efforts, which are expected to be an important consideration for consumers in making decisions. Last but not least, companies need to improve consumers' brand experience through their five-sensory experience through exposure to promotional media. Brand experience can also be emotional involvement in promotional exposure, and when using the product, consumer intellectual experience in the form of the emergence of good thoughts related to product branding. The latter is behavioural experience, i.e. the actions that arise concerning using the product brand. These two variables, namely brand reputation and consistency of brand positioning, play an important role in building brand reputation.

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