
The Impact of Brand Romance Dimensions on Brand Loyalty: A Study on Uniqlo Indonesia

The Impact of Brand
Romance Dimensions

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97

Abstract

The significant growth of the fashion industry has made it an appealing sector to explore. This research aims to investigate how brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance influence brand loyalty in UNIQLO Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method with 75 respondents. The research data was collected through online questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS software. The findings indicate that brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance have a positive relationship with brand loyalty. Furthermore, brand pleasure has the most significant impact on brand loyalty, while brand dominance has the least impact among the three dimensions in affecting brand loyalty in the case of UNIQLO Indonesia.

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Keywords: Brand arousal; brand dominance; brand loyalty; brand pleasure.

Introduction

Due to the growing world population, there was a high demand for apparel and footwear, resulting in the rapid expansion of the fashion industry since 2021 (Smith, 2022). A report by Research and Markets, an Irish market research company, in 2023 shows that the global apparel market is \$652.94 billion in 2023, increasing from \$610.12 billion in 2022 (Research and Markets, 2023). The same report also shows that the market is expected to grow to \$830.69 billion in 2027. The industry is constantly evolving with new trends and ideas, and according to Morgan (2020), it will continue to see many innovations in the coming years driven by new technologies and changing customer demands. With an eye toward the future, the fashion industry is expected to transform in response to evolving trends and customer needs.

According to Fiarani (2020), Indonesia is an attractive market for textiles and clothing industry due to its steady economic growth and huge population. Indonesia's fashion industry has a significant impact on the country's economy. The textile and apparel sector experienced a remarkable growth rate of 18.98% in the first quarter of 2019, significantly higher than the previous year's 7.46% (Azly, 2022). The Creative Economic Agency has also confirmed that Indonesia's fashion industry contributed about 18.01% to its creative economy, ranking as the second top contributor with a GDP growth rate of approximately 4.05% (Shibab, 2019).

UNIQLO, a global fashion brand, aspires to dominate the Indonesian market due to Indonesia's fashion industry potential and Indonesians' preference for international fashion brands. Yasuhiro Hayashi, the Chief Operating Officer of PT. Fast Retailing, expressed his confidence in making UNIQLO the most popular and number-one fashion brand in Indonesia, given the positive response from Indonesians and the promising prospect of the Indonesian fashion market (Arini, 2013). However, with other fashion brands in Indonesia, such as Zara, H&M, etc. and also other local fashion brands, the plan to make UNIQLO the number one fashion brand might not be easy.



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Based on Arslan (2020), a competitive advantage can be achieved by having loyal customers. Loyal customers have been believed to be the success factor of companies (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). According to Phau et al. (2013), emotional attachment is believed to be the key to creating a strong relationship between a brand and its customers. This emotional attachment, captured in brand romance theory, has been proven to be an influential factor of brand loyalty in several sectors, e.g. automobile (Loureiro et al., 2017) and banking (Khan & Rahman, 2017).

Previous studies (Hsieh et al., 2021, Petzer et al., 2014, Rathnayake, 2021) found that the dimensions of brand romance had a significant impact on brand loyalty. When customers see a brand like a romantic partner, the relationships between the brand and the customers become less costly to retain (Hess, Story, & Danes, 2011). Based on Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011), brand romance means building a relationship bond with customers, which rules customer cognition by generating pleasure through arousal when consuming the product. Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) concluded that there are three dimensions of brand romance: brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance. Brand pleasure is the extent to which customers have positive feelings towards a brand (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011). Brand arousal is when the positive feelings become intense to arouse the customers effectively (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011). Consumer activity, reaction, intention, and brand loyalty are all influenced by the emotion of arousal and pleasure (Li et al., 2012). Last but not least, brand dominance catches the ability of the brand to occupy the consumers' minds (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011). Prior works done by Petzer et al. (2014) and Ali et al. (2017) found that brand dominance has a positive impact on the brand loyalty. Therefore, consumers' deep and strong emotional connection with the brands has created a potential relationship between brand pleasure, brand arousal, brand dominance, and brand loyalty.

Adopting the research model by Petzer et al. (2014), this study aims to analyze the influence of brand romance dimensions, namely brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance, on brand loyalty in the case of UNIQLO Indonesia. The result of this research will not only be beneficial for UNIQLO Indonesia or other similar fashion brands, but it will also help marketing practitioners who want to increase customers' loyalty by building emotional bonds with them.

Literature Review

Brand Loyalty

Oliver (1999) defined brand loyalty as a strong commitment to often purchase or patronize preferred goods in the future, leading to repeat purchases of the exact brand despite the possibility of situational effect and marketing initiatives to prompt switching behavior. Similar to Oliver (1999), Kotler and Keler (2016) defined brand loyalty as a strong commitment to purchase goods and services repeatedly, which developed into a constant preference in the future to purchase the same brand, despite any situation and marketing factors that might cause behavioral shifts. Moreover, according to Fitriani and Achmad (2021), brand loyalty can be interpreted as a positive customer perception of a brand in which consumers have a strong tendency to purchase the same product again, either now or in the future. In addition, Ballantyne et al. (2006) say that brand loyalty is a favorable attitude and commitment toward a brand that can lead to continuous purchases. Supporting other researchers, Prasad et al. (2019) explained that highly loyal customers will not consider other products or brands. In conclusion, brand loyalty can be regarded as an essential aspect in which customers are loyal to a brand and willing to repeat purchases from the same brand either now or in the future.

According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), there are two aspects of brand loyalty: attitudinal and behavioral. Behavioral expressed customer behavior in repeated brand purchases, whereas attitudinal loyalty was a degree of attachment to a particular value associated with the brand. The study is still relevant today because it is used in a current paper by Hsieh et al. (2021) and to measure brand loyalty. Thus, in this research, the researchers will adopt two aspects of brand loyalty from Hsieh et al. (2021) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001).

Brand Pleasure

Brand pleasure can be explained as the degree that a brand offers joy to the purchaser through consumption (Kim & Hahn, 2012). Hanzae et al. (2011) also implied that brand pleasure was the customer's capability to feel pleasure and joy. Considering the definitions of the previous authors, brand pleasure can be defined as the level of customer excitement, a positive connection, and a feeling of love for the brand.

With regard to the relationship between brand pleasure and brand loyalty, Hanzae et al. (2011) have proved that brand loyalty was directly impacted favorably by brand pleasure. Likewise, Quester and Lim (2003) also discovered that brand pleasure was a strong (positive) brand loyalty predictor. Brand pleasure creates positive emotional responses in customers in which they will feel attracted and enjoyment derived from the consumption of the brand, resulting in customers being likely to be loyal to the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Kim & Hahn, 2012). In other words, higher brand loyalty is expected if the brand pleases the customer. As a result, this study proposes the following:

H₁: Brand pleasure affects brand loyalty.

Brand Arousal

Arousal could be described as the feeling of excitement, stimulation, alert, or active in a situation (Hsieh et al., 2021). This intense positive emotions towards a brand, that are beyond preference, can stimulate consumption. A study by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) stated that brand arousal was a strong, intense feeling to arouse the consumer. Therefore, the researchers concluded that brand arousal is the customers' preferences and strong desire toward the brand.

Regarding the connection between brand arousal and brand loyalty, brand arousal refers to emotional attachments that are the driving force behind consumption which also can create consumer-brand relationships. This emotional attachment means the customer has stronger emotions or feelings regarding a specific brand. Therefore, when the customer has a strong feeling about the brand, they become involved with the brand, which can result in them being loyal to the brand (Petzer et al., 2014). A study by Petzer et al. (2014), Han et al. (2018), and Hsieh et al. (2021) showed that brand arousal impacted brand loyalty. Thus, there can be a relationship between brand arousal and brand loyalty. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H₂: Brand arousal affects brand loyalty.

Brand Dominance

Rathnayake (2021) defined brand romance as the ability of a brand to dominate customer's mind and life. The person would assert that the brand was a "part of me" and an "extension of me" due to this cognitive dominance (Belk, 1988). Moreover, a study by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) implied that brand dominance was about the consumers tending to think about the brand's meaning and keep thinking about the brand frequently. The researchers conclude that brand dominance is a brand's ability to dominate and obsessively

influence the consumer's mind toward the brand.

Hatice and Cemal (2017) discovered that brand dominance positively affected young consumers' brand loyalty. Other researchers like Petzer et al. (2014) and Ali et al. (2017) also found that brand dominance positively affected brand loyalty. This is because brand dominance usually reflects the brand's ability to engage with the customer's mind. When a brand was established in consumers' lives and there was congruence between customer identity and the brand, it could lead to brand loyalty (Papista & Dimitriadis, 2012; Ye et al., 2012). Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H₃: Brand dominance affects brand loyalty.

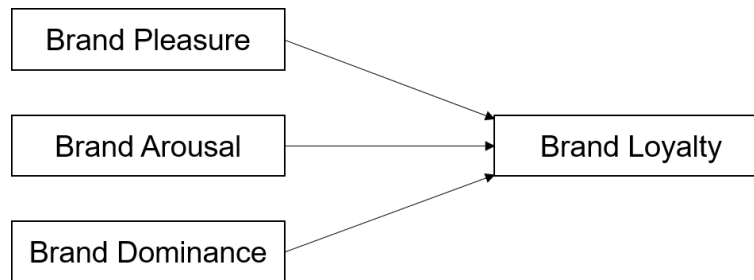


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Methodology

Data Collection Method and Processes

A total of 75 respondents above 17 years old who have ever worn UNIQLO products are chosen as respondents of this research. The data was then analyzed with multiple regression analysis to know which dimensions of brand romance affect brand loyalty significantly. The respondents' profiles are shown in Figure 1, 2, and 3.

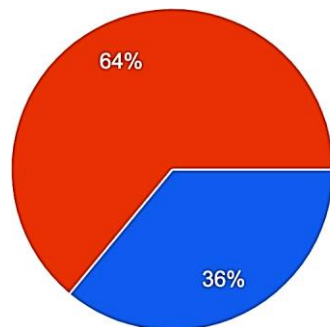


Figure 1. Respondents' Gender

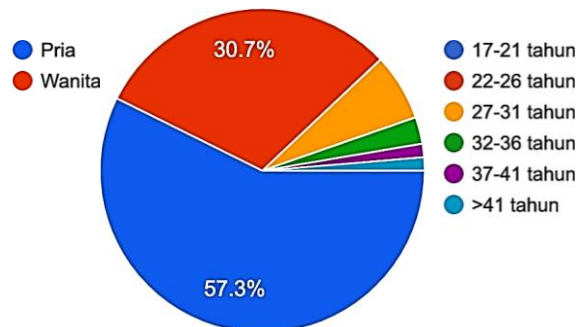


Figure 2. Respondents' Age

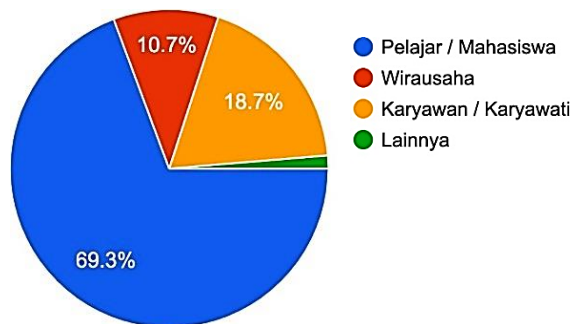


Figure 3. Respondents' Occupation

Figure 1 shows that 64% of the respondents are females and the rest 34% are males. The age group of the respondents are dominated by 17-21 years old and 22-26 years old (see Figure 2). For the occupation, most respondents are students, employees, and entrepreneurs (see Figure 3).

Measures

Table 1 shows the measurement items for brand loyalty, arousal, pleasure, and dominance.

Table 1. Measurement Items

Items		Source
Brand Loyalty		
Behavioral Loyalty	I will buy this UNIQLO brand the next time I buy fashion products. (BL1)	Hsieh et al. (2021);
	I intend to keep purchasing this UNIQLO brand. (BL2)	
Attitudinal Loyalty	The UNIQLO brand would be my first choice. (BL3)	Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001).
	I will be loyal to the UNIQLO brand. (BL4)	
	I will not consider other brands if this UNIQLO brand is available in the marketplace. (BL5)	
	I would pay more for this UNIQLO brand than other brands. (BL6)	
Brand Pleasure	I am really happy that the UNIQLO product is available or exists. (BP1)	Rathnayake (2021)
	Using this UNIQLO product gives me great pleasure. (BP2).	
	I love my UNIQLO product. (BP3)	
Brand Arousal	I look forward to using this UNIQLO product. (BA1)	Rathnayake (2021)
	I desire my UNIQLO product. (BA2)	
	I want this UNIQLO product. (BA3)	
	I am attracted to this UNIQLO brand. (BA4)	
Brand Dominance	This UNIQLO product often dominates my thoughts. (BD1)	Rathnayake (2021)
	This UNIQLO product always seems to be on my mind. (BD2)	
	My daydreams often include this UNIQLO product. (BD3)	
	Sometimes I feel I cannot control my thoughts as they are obsessively on this UNIQLO product. (BD4)	

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis

Reliability and Validity

As could be seen in Table 2, all measurement items were reliable, since the Cronbach’s Alpha was above 0.7.

Based on the results of the validity test in Table 3, all measurement items of all variables were valid, proven by the significance values that were lower than 0.05.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Brand Loyalty	3.5422	0.81792	0.879	0.886	6
Brand Pleasure	4.1289	0.67092	0.808	0.810	3
Brand Arousal	3.8167	0.78341	0.896	0.902	4
Brand Dominance	2.8067	1.15048	0.937	0.937	4

Table 3. Validity Test

Items	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Brand Loyalty		
BL1	0.749	<0.001
BL2	0.759	<0.001
BL3	0.882	<0.001
BL4	0.859	<0.001
BL5	0.782	<0.001
BL6	0.748	<0.001
Brand Pleasure		
BP1	0.860	<0.001
BP2	0.868	<0.001
BP3	0.825	<0.001
Brand Arousal		
BA1	0.902	<0.001
BA2	0.898	<0.001
BA3	0.887	<0.001
BA4	0.823	<0.001
Brand Dominance		
BD1	0.940	<0.001
BD2	0.936	<0.001
BD3	0.950	<0.001
BD4	0.840	<0.001

BLUE Classical Assumptions

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Pleasure	0.467	2.143
Brand Arousal	0.304	3.288
Brand Dominance	0.496	2.018

The model did not have a multicollinearity problem, since the Tolerance values were above 0.1 and the VIF values were below 10.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test

Variables	Significance Value
Brand Pleasure	0.707
Brand Arousal	0.250
Brand Dominance	0.122

Using Glejser test, the result showed that there was no heteroscedasticity problem in the model, since all significance values were above 0.05.

Using the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value was 0.068, and thus, the residuals could be said to be normally distributed.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The result of the Adjusted R² showed that brand pleasure, arousal, and dominance could explain 71.8% of the variance in brand loyalty.

Table 6. Adjusted R²

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
.854	.730	.718	2.604

Table 7. t-Test Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.012	0.322		-.037	0.970
Brand Pleasure	0.410	0.110	0.336	3.722	< 0.001
Brand Arousal	0.300	0.117	0.287	2.568	0.012
Brand Dominance	0.256	0.062	0.360	4.104	< 0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

As shown in Table 7, the significance values of all dimensions of brand romance were less than 0.05. This means that brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance have a significant impact on brand loyalty. The highest impact comes from brand pleasure, continued by brand arousal, and last is brand dominance.

Discussion

The Effect of Brand Pleasure on Brand Loyalty

Brand pleasure was proven to have the highest impact on brand loyalty compared to other dimensions of brand romance. Brand pleasure refers to customers' happiness, pleasure, and love of the product, which can eventually lead to brand loyalty. The higher the emotion, the stronger customers may be loyal to a brand. In addition, a previous journal by Petzer et al. (2014) supported this result by claiming that brand pleasure predicted brand loyalty. Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) also supported the researcher's claim that brand pleasure is one of the predictors of brand loyalty as the customers should love the brand first, which leads to positive effects that may drive loyalty.

The Effect of Brand Arousal on Brand Loyalty

The second highest impact on brand loyalty came from brand arousal. Brand arousal causes customers to have an emotional experience, like a strong desire or interest in the brand, leading them to be loyal to it. In addition, the findings of this study also suggested that brand arousal could promote brand loyalty in the fashion industry. The discovery that brand arousal influences brand loyalty favorably supports the findings of Rathnayake (2021) that brand arousal, an emotional state that can drive the repurchase of a brand, makes the customer loyal to the brand. Furthermore, the findings by Petzer et al. (2014) also support the researchers' claim that brand arousal significantly influences brand loyalty. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand arousal is possible to make customers feel a strong desire and attraction to a brand. Thus, it leads to continuous purchasing of the same brand repeatedly.

The Effect of Brand Dominance on Brand Loyalty

Last but not least, brand dominance is proven to have the least significant influence on brand loyalty. This means that the domination of the UNIQLO brand on the customers' minds will not influence brand loyalty as much as the happiness from the brand and the desire for the

brand do. Despite the least impact, brand dominance still positively and significantly impacts brand loyalty. This finding supports the findings of the study by Rathnayake (2021), claiming that customers create strong commitment toward a particular brand, both attitudinal and behaviorally, once the brand has become ingrained in their thoughts. As brand dominance has a profound cognitive dominance, a brand needs to be able to give a satisfied overall experience to the customer so that it will dominate the customers' minds, making them not think about buying from other brands, resulting in loyalty to the brand.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research found that three brand romance dimensions, namely brand pleasure, brand arousal, and brand dominance, affect brand loyalty significantly. The highest impact comes from brand pleasure, then brand arousal, and last but not least, brand dominance.

Despite the significant relationship between brand romance dimensions and brand loyalty, there is still room for improvement for further study. The respondents of this study were dominated by females and a group of people from the age of 17-21 years old. Thus, the result of this research might not be generalized to other age groups. Future studies may consider involving gender and age groups or generations as the moderators, since they are believed to impact the relationship between brand dimensions and brand loyalty (Rathnayake, 2021).

Moreover, further research can also consider including brand attitude and romance dimensions as predictors of brand loyalty, as Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) suggested. There is a possibility that customers may be loyal to a brand not only because of an emotional attachment but also because of having positive beliefs about a brand, which might intrigue customers to be loyal.

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