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The Synergy Between Brand Experience and Brand Community in Fostering Brand Love: Insights from a Consumer-Centric Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how brand experience and brand community influence brand love for Vespa products. The research method involved a survey of 100 Vespa users who are members of the Vespa community in Banyumas. The data was analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between brand community, brand experience, brand love, and consumer loyalty. The results show that brand experience has a positive and significant effect on brand love, and brand community has a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty. The implications of this study are that companies can enhance brand love by building a strong brand community and providing a positive brand experience. Additionally, this study enriches the literature on brand love by highlighting the role of brand communities in strengthening the relationship between consumers and the brand.

Keywords: Brand Love, Brand Experience, Brand Community.

1. Introduction

Brand love has emerged as a key concept in contemporary marketing, emphasizing customers' emotional commitment to brands. This phenomenon goes beyond brand loyalty or satisfaction; it refers to a deeper emotional connection that influences customer behavior and decision-making processes. As competition increases in more saturated markets, understanding the mechanics of brand love can offer valuable insights into customer preferences and brand advocacy. The significance of brand love lies in its potential to establish long-term relationships between customers and brands, ultimately fostering brand loyalty and advocacy (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Batra et al., 2012).

In the context of a consumer-centric approach, brand love becomes even more essential as this approach places the needs, desires, and preferences of customers at the core of all marketing strategies. Consumers are no longer viewed as passive objects but as active partners in the co-creation of brand value. By understanding brand love, companies can design more personal and relevant strategies for consumers, which can enhance emotional attachment and strengthen long-term relationships between customers and brands.

brand love involves recognizing its complex nature. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) define brand love as a consumer's emotional and passionate devotion to a brand, which can manifest in

various ways such as attachment, passion, and commitment. This concept highlights the complexities of brand love, shaped by personal experiences, brand attributes, and social interactions. In the context of a consumer-centric approach, understanding these elements allows marketers to create more meaningful experiences tailored to individual needs, thus forming stronger emotional bonds. Brand trust, brand identity, and perceived brand quality all play an essential role in the formation of brand love (Submitter et al., 2020). Understanding these elements is critical for marketers seeking to build emotional connections with their customers, as brand love can lead to increased loyalty and positive word-of-mouth communication (Shetty & Fitzsimmons, 2022; Wallace et al., 2014).

The interaction between brand experience and brand community enriches our understanding of brand love. Brakus et al. (2009) define brand experience as the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that consumers experience in relation to brand-related stimuli (Khan et al., 2021). These encounters shape consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward the brand, resulting in emotional attachment. Within a consumer-centric approach, marketers should actively design brand experiences that are engaging and relevant to consumers, thus fostering deeper engagement. Additionally, brand communities groups of consumers with a shared interest in a brand help strengthen the emotional ties between consumers and businesses. According to Coelho et al. (2019), brand communities can amplify the impact of brand love by fostering loyalty and advocacy among their members. Therefore, investigating the relationship between brand love, brand experience, and brand community is essential for understanding consumer-brand dynamics from a consumer-centric perspective.

The importance of analyzing these structures is particularly evident in the case of the Vespa brand in Indonesia. Vespa has built a strong brand community aligned with consumers' lifestyles and identities, especially among younger generations. The brand's unique positioning and cultural significance in Indonesia have resulted in a devoted following, where customers not only purchase Vespa products but also actively participate in community events and gatherings (Jaskiewicz et al., 2020). From a consumer-centric approach, Vespa has successfully understood and fulfilled the emotional needs of its consumers, which in turn fosters brand love and community engagement. This involvement demonstrates how brand love and community can influence consumer behavior, making it a compelling case for further research.

As Vespa's popularity grows in Indonesia, understanding the factors that contribute to brand loyalty and community engagement becomes increasingly crucial. The emotional bonds customers form with Vespa products can significantly impact their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. This study aims to provide insights into how brand love, brand experience, and brand community can be leveraged to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty in the competitive landscape of the Indonesian market. Through a consumer-centric approach, Vespa can continue to strengthen its relationship with customers by offering personalized experiences and fostering active participation in its community.

Finally, the study of brand love, brand experience, and brand community provides fertile ground for research, particularly in the context of the Vespa brand in Indonesia. Understanding how these dimensions interact to influence consumer behavior can offer valuable insights for marketers seeking to enhance brand relationships. As companies navigate the complexities of

consumer interactions, emotional connections will remain a key focus, emphasizing the importance of cultivating brand love through meaningful experiences and community engagement. Within the framework of a consumer-centric approach, it is essential for companies to continually prioritize customer needs as the foundation of every marketing strategy to build long-term relationships based on brand love.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Brand Experience to Brand Love

Brand love refers to consumers' emotional attachment to a specific product (Aro et al., 2018; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love results from a long-term engagement with a brand, with an emphasis on the affective factors related with the consumer's brand identification (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Huber et al., 2015). Some consumers may fall in love with a brand right away, but others may need time to experience all aspects before building an attachment to it (Langner et al., 2016). Overall, enjoyable experiences are critical in developing consumer brand love (Langner et al., 2016). Consumer encounters with a brand have a significant impact on the strength of the relationship between the two. Consumer experience has been shown to be an important factor in developing brand love (Batra et al., 2012). Roy et al. (2013) underlined that brand experience can influence brand loyalty. Consumers that have good evaluations of their brand experiences form emotional links with the brand, which strengthens their brand love (Chen & Lin, 2019). As a result, previous research supports the premise that brand experience is important in shaping brand love.

H1 : Brand Experience Has a Positive Influence on Brand Love

2.2 Brand Community to Brand Love

Brand communities shape consumers' social identities, which might have an impact on brand love (Albert & Merunka, 2013). According to Palazon et al. (2018), emotional attachments formed through interactions with other community members can improve an individual's bond with a brand. This is consistent with social identity theory, which holds that people tend to identify with organizations they find relevant, in this case brand communities. As a result, the more strongly an individual identifies with a brand community, the more likely they are to develop brand love. Furthermore, Wong (2021) found that emotive interaction in brand communities can influence brand love, albeit indirectly. This involvement includes good experiences achieved through interactions with the community, which can deepen emotional connections to the business. This study emphasizes the role of cognitive engagement as a mediator between affective engagement and brand love. In other words, while emotional involvement may not always have a direct impact on brand love, increased understanding and identification of the brand through community interactions can help to strengthen it.

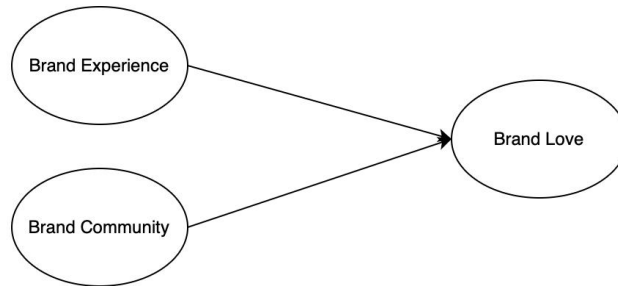*H2: Brand community has a positive influence on Brand Love*

Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Methodology

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method and employs a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The location of this research is in the Banyumas region. The subjects of this research are Vespa users in Banyumas. The object of this research is consumer behavior, specifically brand love among Vespa users in Banyumas, influenced by the variables of Brand Experience and Brand Community.

3.1 Population
According to Suliyanto (2011), the population is all people, objects, or entities that are the focus of the research. The target population of this research is all Vespa users who are members of the community in Banyumas.

3.2 Sample
According to Sugiyono (2016), a sample is a subset of the population that acts as a data source in research, whereas the population is a subset of the entire characteristics of the population. This study used Limeshow sampling. Each cluster is mapped according to research-relevant characteristics. Once the clusters have been defined, respondents are determined using simple random selection or stratified random sampling within each cluster. The number of samples collected from each cluster is proportional to the size of the cluster. The technique is repeated until the total sample size reaches 100. This technique produces a sample that accurately represents the population's diversity.

4. Results
4.1 Classic Assumption Test

The Normality Test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov yielded residual values that are normally distributed, which means the data is also considered normal and can proceed to the next analysis.

Next, a Multicollinearity Test was conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which showed that all variables had a tolerance value of less than 1 and a VIF value of less than 10, indicating that the data does not experience multicollinearity. Meanwhile, for the Heteroscedasticity Test using the Glejser Test, the significance value obtained is greater than the alpha value (0.05), so this research model does not contain elements of heteroscedasticity.

4.2 Validity and Reliability Test

Validity testing uses Pearson's product-moment formula, which is conducted by calculating the correlation between each item score of the questions from each variable and the total score of that variable. If the item score correlates positively with the total item score and is higher than the correlation between items, it indicates the validity of the instrument. For this research, the df value can be calculated as follows: df = n-2 or 110-2 = 108, with a significance level of 0.05, resulting in a table r value of 0.1874. (Two tail). Reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha formula, which has a value of 0.6. A questionnaire can be said to be reliable if each variable has a Cronbach alpha value > 0.6. Based on the reliability test results, it shows that all variables have a Cronbach alpha value > 0.6, so it can be said that the questionnaire used in this study is reliable. Here are the results of the reliability test that has been conducted:

Table 1 Validity and ReliabilityTest

Variabels		Crobach's Alpha	Critical Value	R Count	R Tabel (Two Tale)	Reliable/Not Reliable	Valid / Not Valid
BE	BE1			0,85	0,1874		Valid
	BE2			0,893	0,1874		Valid
	BE3			0,866	0,1874		Valid
	BE4			0,895	0,1874		Valid
	BE5			0,845	0,1874		Valid
	BE6	0,850	0,6	0,814	0,1874	Reliable	Valid
	BE7			0,874	0,1874		Valid
	BE8			0,848	0,1874		Valid
	BE9			0,866	0,1874		Valid
	BE10			0,859	0,1874		Valid
	BE11			0,836	0,1874		Valid
BC	BC1			0,9	0,1874		Valid
	BC2			0,942	0,1874		Valid
	BC3	0,91	0,6	0,955	0,1874	Reliable	Valid
	BC4			0,935	0,1874		Valid
	BC5			0,767	0,1874		Valid
BL	BL1			0,833	0,1874		Valid
	BL2			0,82	0,1874		Valid
	BL3			0,772	0,1874		Valid
	BL4			0,52	0,1874		Valid
	BL5	0,757	0,6	0,826	0,1874	Reliable	Valid
	BL6			0,809	0,1874		Valid
	BL7			0,485	0,1874		Valid

Variabels	Crobach's Alpha	Critical Value	R Count	R Tabel (Two Tale)	Reliable/Not Reliable	Valid / Not Valid
BL8			0,83	0,1874		Valid
BL9			0,793	0,1874		Valid
BL10			0,81	0,1874		Valid

Source: Data proceeds 2024

From the results of the above test, all question indicators are considered valid and reliable, so the testing can proceed to the next stage.

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression

From the regression results using the SPSS program, the regression coefficients can be seen in the table below:

Table 2 Multiple Linear Regression

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	8.145	1.730		4.710	.000
	BE	.453	.052	.556	8.631	.000
	BC	.620	.100	.400	6.210	.000

Source: Data proceeds, 2024

Based on the table above, the multiple linear regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 8,145 + 0,556j_1 + 0,400j_2$$

Information::
Y = Dependent Variable (Brand Love)
j_1 = Brand Experience
Brand Experience Coefficient (β_1 = 0.556): For every one-unit increase in Brand Experience, Brand Love increases by 0.556 units, assuming Brand Community remains constant.
j_1 = Brand Community
Brand Community Coefficient (β_2 = 0.400): For every one-unit increase in Brand Communityengagement, Brand Love increases by 0.400 units, holding Brand Experience constant.
8.145 = Constant value, this represents the average level of Brand Love when no influence from Brand Experience or Brand Community is present.

4.3 T Test

Table 3 T test

Variabel	T Count	T Tabel	
BE	8,631	1,984	Significant
BC	6,210	1,984	Significant

Source: Data proceeds, 2024

Based on the t-test results where the calculated t value > table t value; (8.631 > 1.984) and the t-test significance value of 0.000, it can be concluded that brand experience has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love. T-test results where the calculated t value > table t value; (6.210 > 1.984) and the t-test significance value of 0.000, it can be concluded that brand community has a positive and significant effect on Brand Love.

4.4 F Test

Table 4 F test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	2476.442	2	1238.221	212.784	.000[b]
	Residual	622.649	107	5.819		
	Total	3099.091	109			

Source: Data proceeds, 2024

The results of the F test yielded a calculated F value of 212.784 with a significance value (P value) of 0.000. With a significance level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$). The significance value (P value) of 0.000 < 0.05. Or by looking at the F value, the condition is accepted if F Count > F Table. It can be seen that in the calculation, the F Count value is 212.784 and the F Table value is 0.1169, which means F Count > F Table or 212.784 > 0.1169. Based on that comparison, H0 is rejected.

5. Discussion

5.1 Brand Experience and Brand Love
The findings confirm that brand experience significantly influences brand love for Vespa products. This relationship aligns with Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization of brand experience as a set of sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli. In the context of Vespa, this strong connection can be attributed to the unique sensory and emotional experiences the brand offers its users.

The distinctive design aesthetics of Vespa scooters, characterized by their retro-modern appeal and iconic silhouette, creates a powerful sensory experience that transcends mere transportation. As noted by Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010), such distinctive sensory experiences contribute significantly to emotional attachment to a brand. Vespa owners often describe their riding experience as more than just commuting; it's an emotional journey that engages all senses - from the distinctive sound of the engine to the feeling of wind while riding, creating what Schmitt, (2012) describes as "holistic brand experiences."

This finding is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where Vespa has cultivated a unique brand experience that goes beyond product functionality. As observed in urban centers like Jakarta and Bali, Vespa riders often speak of their scooters as extensions of their personalities, supporting Fournier (1998) assertion that consumers form relationships with brands that mirror human relationships. The vintage Vespa models, in particular, create what Loveland et al. (2010) Loveland et al. (2010) describe as "experiential benefits" that contribute to emotional bonding with the brand.

5.1 Brand Community and Brand Love
The research confirms that brand community significantly affects brand love for Vespa. This finding supports McAlexander et al. (2002) work on brand community integration, where shared experiences and consciousness of kind among community members strengthen individual bonds with the brand. The Vespa community in Indonesia exemplifies what Muniz Jr & O'guinn (2001) termed as "markers of community" - shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility.

In Indonesia, Vespa communities have evolved beyond simple user groups into what Schau et al. (2009) describe as "value-creating practices." These communities organize regular events, from city rides to cross-country expeditions, fostering what Cova & Pace (2006) identify as "collective brand use and brand meaning negotiation." The phenomenon of "Vespa Extreme" in Indonesia,

where enthusiasts modify their scooters in extraordinary ways, demonstrates what Kozinets (2001) describes as "community-based consumption practices" that deepen emotional connections to the brand.

The strong influence of brand community on brand love for Vespa aligns with Thompson & Sinha (2008) findings that brand community participation leads to higher brand loyalty and emotional attachment. In Indonesia, Vespa communities often act as what Brodie et al. (2013) term "engagement platforms," where members share not just their love for the vehicles but also their personal stories, creating a narrative that intertwines their identities with the brand.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals the significant impact of brand experience and brand community on brand love for Vespa products in Indonesia. The findings highlight that brand experience, through sensory, affective, and behavioral interactions, plays a crucial role in fostering brand love. Additionally, brand communities, built around shared experiences and social connections, enhance consumers' emotional bonds with the Vespa brand.

The theoretical implications of this research emphasize the importance of brand experience and brand community in building a strong emotional attachment, or brand love, between consumers and the brand. This research expands the theory related to brand experience as the main driver that triggers consumer love for the brand through sensory, affective, and behavioral interactions. Additionally, the role of brand community in strengthening consumer emotional loyalty is recognized as an important contribution in the literature, with the community creating social bonds that enhance love for the brand.

Vespa Indonesia can take several steps to improve both brand experience and community involvement. They can offer exclusive test rides and create immersive showrooms to showcase their heritage. Building a Vespa community platform and organizing events at local and national levels will strengthen consumer bonds. Using digital tools like mobile apps and rewards programs will further enhance the riding experience and community engagement.

Vespa should focus on creating memorable experiences by highlighting both the practical and emotional sides of their products. This can be done through marketing that emphasizes Vespa's unique sensory appeal. For building communities, the company should invest in platforms and events to connect users, while also leveraging user-generated content to build stronger loyalty. An integrated approach combining experience and community-building will deepen consumer attachment to the brand.

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations suggest opportunities for future research. Longitudinal studies could explore how brand love evolves over time, while cross-cultural comparisons could reveal how these relationships vary across different markets. Researchers could also examine additional antecedents of brand love, such as brand authenticity or heritage, and explore how consumer personality traits or cultural factors may moderate these relationships. Methodology extensions, such as qualitative or experimental designs, could offer deeper insights into the emotional aspects of brand love.

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