

Enhancing Brand Equity : The Role of Brand Association, Image, Awareness, and Loyalty through Perceived Quality

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ABSTRACT

Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty play an important role in shaping brand equity through perceived quality at Lintasarta, because each of these elements contributes directly to how consumers experience and assess the quality of the products or services offered. This study aims to analyze the relationship between these elements and Lintasarta's brand equity, with perceived quality as a mediator. The research method used is an online survey that collects information from Lintasarta customers through a probability sampling approach with 100 respondents. Data were collected from users of Lintasarta products or services. Regression analysis is used to test the relationship between independent variables (Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty), mediator variables (Perceived Quality), and dependent variables (Brand Equity). The results of the study indicate that Brand Association does not have a significant effect on Brand Equity, but Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty have a significant effect on Lintasarta's Brand Equity. Perceived quality also acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between these variables and Brand Equity. These findings emphasize the importance of effective management of factors influencing perceived quality to strengthen Lintasarta's brand equity in a competitive market. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of brand equity in today's digital era and the relevance of marketing strategies implemented by IT companies such as Lintasarta.

KEYWORDS

Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity, Perceived Quality

1. Introduction

PT. XYZ, known as one of the leading telecommunications network and infrastructure service providers in Indonesia, has succeeded in building a strong brand image and awareness in the market. However, in a highly competitive and dynamic industry such as telecommunications and information technology, maintaining and increasing brand equity is an increasingly complex challenge. Although Lintasarta already has a wide customer base, the company is still faced with fierce competition and changes in consumer preferences influenced by technological developments. This is where the importance of understanding brand equity and the factors that influence it becomes crucial. Brand equity reflects the value that consumers place on a brand name and their relationship with the brand, which in turn influences their behavior and purchasing decisions (Veloutsou, 2023). Perceived quality, defined as consumers' assessment of the superiority of a product or service compared to other

alternatives, is one of the main determinants in building brand equity (Erdem, 2022). However, to date, research examining how brand associations, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty interact with each other in the context of Lintasarta is still very limited. This empirical gap shows that there is still much to be learned about the dynamics of brand equity, especially in this ever-evolving industry.

The urgency of this study lies in the need for Lintasarta to understand how perceived quality can mediate the relationship between variables such as brand association, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty with overall brand equity. In an ever-changing industry, managing factors that influence perceived quality is key to strengthening brand equity and maintaining a company's competitiveness.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the Lintasarta case study, which has not been widely discussed in depth in academic literature. Exploring the relationship between these factors specifically

on the Lintasarta brand will provide new insights that are relevant not only theoretically but also practically for the telecommunications and information technology industry in Indonesia. In addition, this study will contribute to enriching the literature on how these variables influence perceived quality and, ultimately, brand equity.

The practical contribution of this study is to provide strategic recommendations for Lintasarta to improve brand equity through the development of stronger brand associations, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty. Meanwhile, its theoretical contribution is to broaden the understanding of the interaction between these variables and how they influence perceived quality.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the influence of brand association, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty on Lintasarta's brand equity, and to analyze the role of perceived quality as a mediator in the relationship. Thus, this study is expected to help Lintasarta in strengthening its brand equity and increasing its competitiveness in the Indonesian telecommunications market.

2. Scope and Methodology

This study aims to study the relationship between brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty to brand equity through perceived quality in customers of PT Aplikasi Lintasarta. This study uses a quantitative approach to better understand the hypothesized relationship. The design of this study is a descriptive-correlational survey designed to test the relationship between predetermined variables.

The population in this study were all customers of PT Aplikasi Lintasarta. The sample was taken using a probability sampling technique, which is considered appropriate for empirical research conducted in a particular environment, industry, or market. The number of samples used was 100 respondents, selected through a random sampling technique. The respondents selected were those who were already Lintasarta customers. This number of samples is in accordance with the guidelines in the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) test which recommends a sample size between 100 and 200 for the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method (Hair et al., 2019).

Data were collected using an online questionnaire consisting of six sections, designed to measure the research variables. This questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale to evaluate responses, where respondents are asked to rate whether they agree or disagree with the statements given. The instruments used have been tested for validity and reliability to ensure that the data collected is accurate and consistent. To analyze the data, this study used SmartPLS 3.0 software. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method

was chosen because of its ability to handle complex models and relatively small samples. This analysis was used to confirm the existing relationship between brand association, brand image, brand awareness, and brand loyalty to Lintasarta's brand equity, with perceived quality as a mediator. The PLS-SEM approach allows researchers to test hypotheses and understand the influence of these variables on brand equity.

3. Literature Review

Brand Association: Brand Equity

(Lee, J.Y., 2019) brand association is an important element in brand equity that affects how consumers remember and associate brands with various associations related to the product or service. This can be taste, quality, packaging, and reputation. (Hafez, 2022) Building and maintaining brand equity also faces challenges, including competitor branding that can damage the image or brand. A strong brand association can help in dealing with these challenges, as it can create strong consumer loyalty and maintain brand existence.

Brand Image: Brand Equity

(Shaan, A., 2022) Brand Image is an important element of Brand Equity that affects how consumers identify and remember a brand through various associations associated with the product or service. This can be an image, perception, and consumer experience of the brand. (Schivinski, I., 2019) Building and maintaining Brand Equity also faces challenges, including competitor branding that can damage the image or brand. A strong Brand Image can help in facing these challenges, as it can create strong consumer loyalty and maintain brand existence.

Brand Awareness: Brand Equity

(Song, J. 2019) Brand Awareness makes it easier for consumers to remember a brand, so that the brand becomes better known and attracts consumers' attention to consume it. The stronger the brand awareness, the stronger the consumer loyalty to the brand. (Moliner, M. A., 2021) Building and maintaining Brand Equity also faces challenges, including competitor branding that can damage the image or brand. Strong Brand Awareness can help in dealing with these challenges, as it can create strong consumer loyalty and maintain brand existence.

Brand Loyalty: Brand Equity

(Chaudhuri, A., 2020) Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity are closely interrelated in the marketing context. Brand Loyalty, which reflects the level of consumer loyalty to a brand, contributes significantly to Brand Equity. Consumer loyalty to brands increases the value of Brand Equity by increasing brand awareness, brand preference, and strengthening consumers' positive associations with the brand. In many cases, high levels of Brand Loyalty are associated with higher Brand Equity

values because loyal consumers tend to buy products or services from the brand consistently, and may even choose to pay a price premium for the brand.

Brand Equity: Perceived Quality

(Aaker, D. A, 2023) Brand Equity is the financial and non-financial added value associated with a brand, which reflects the brand's capacity to generate future revenue. Perceived Quality is the consumer's perception or assessment of the quality of the product or service offered by a brand. The relationship between Brand Equity and perceived quality shows that high Brand Equity can increase consumer perceptions of the quality of the brand's products or services. In other words, a strong brand reputation and positive experiences associated with the brand can influence how consumers assess the quality of the products or services offered..

4. Findings

Validity Model

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) which uses the PLS Algorithm and Bootstrapping. The PLS algorithm will produce information in the form of construct validity and reliability values (convergent), discriminant validity, R Square, F Square, SRMR (Model Fit), and Multicollinearity. Bootstrapping, as a non-parametric procedure, aims to deal with non-normal data problems, especially if the sample is small (less than 100 respondents) (Hair et al., 2019). The bootstrapping calculation in multiple linear regression will produce a path coefficient (direct effect) which aims to determine whether the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable directly. Using these two models together is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between variables in the context of Product Influence research.

Table 1. Fornell and Larcker criteria

	Brand Association	Brand Awareness	Brand Equity	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty	Perceived Quality
Brand Association	0,840					
Brand Awareness	0,719	0,899				
Brand Equity	0,594	0,659	0,790			
Brand Image	0,631	0,505	0,566	0,839		
Brand Loyalty	0,439	0,534	0,555	0,457	0,823	
Perceived Quality	0,353	0,314	0,494	0,451	0,482	0,829

Note: The table displays discriminant validity that computes the correlation coefficients.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) results

	Brand Association	Brand Awareness	Brand Equity	Brand Image	Brand Loyalty	Perceived Quality
Brand Association						
Brand Awareness	0,860					
Brand Equity	0,746	0,785				
Brand Image	0,907	0,682	0,812			

Brand Loyalty	0,672	0,791	0,850	0,819	
Perceived Quality	0,442	0,370	0,624	0,680	0,739

Source: (Data Analysis Using Smart PLS, 2024).

Table 3. Structural Model

Path	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Brand Association -Brand Equity	0,927	0,355	Not supported
Brand Awareness - Brand Equity	3,333	0,001	Supported
Brand Equity -Perceived Quality	6,903	0,000	Supported
Brand Image -Brand Equity	2,297	0,022	Supported
Brand Loyalty -Brand Equity	2,593	0,010	Supported

Source: Compiled and elaborated by the authors

Measurement Model

In studies that use convergent validity and discriminant validity as measurement models, standardised thresholds are commonly used to evaluate model quality. The following is an explanation of each of these thresholds. Composite Reliability: This measures the internal consistency of the indicators used to measure a construct. The generally accepted threshold is more than 0.7. This means that a composite reliability greater than 0.7 indicates that the indicators within the construct are consistently measuring the same variable. Average volatility Extracted (AVE): This metric determines how much volatility in the measurements is explained by the concept. The predicted threshold is higher than 0.5. An AVE greater than 0.5 suggests that the construct accounts for over half of the variance in its indicators. Discriminant validity measures how effectively a construct differentiates from others. One method for determining discriminant reliability is by contrasting the square root of each concept's AVE to the relationship among that idea and others. The product of the square roots of the AVE should exceed the Pearson correlation between that concept and the other constructs. To ensure that the model is valid and reliable: Convergent validity is proven when composite reliability exceeds 0.7 and AVE exceeds 0.5. Discriminant To assess validity, ensure that the squared root of each construct's AVE is greater than the relationship of that concept and other constructs (Hair, 2017).

Table 4 Reliability test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Association	0,790	0,793	0,877	0,705
Brand Awareness	0,881	0,881	0,927	0,809
Brand Equity	0,799	0,801	0,869	0,625
Brand Image	0,586	0,614	0,826	0,704
Brand Loyalty	0,527	0,535	0,808	0,678
Perceived Quality	0,772	0,787	0,868	0,687

Source: (Data Analysis Using Smart PLS, 2024).

Assessment of The Structure Model

Structural model assessment in research involves the evaluation of the model that relates latent variables (constructs) to indicator variables (observations). This is usually done in the context of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This process ensures that the proposed model accurately represents the relationship between variables and is reliable.

Moderation Effect of Knowledge Sharing

In SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) research, particularly PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares SEM), moderating variables impact the degree or direction of the link between the independent and dependent variables. Moderating variables are additional variables that can affect the strength or direction of the relationship between other variables in the model. (Hair, 2017)

Table 5. Moderation Effect

Path	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Brand Association -> Brand Equity	0,892	0,373	Not supported
Brand Awareness -> Brand Equity	3,147	0,002	Supported
Brand Image -> Brand Equity	2,158	0,031	Supported
Brand Loyalty -> Brand Equity	2,189	0,029	Supported

Source: Compiled and elaborated by the authors

In table 6 above, we present the findings of the hypothesis testing, including the relationship paths, test statistics (t-statistics), P-values, and interpretation of the results. From table 6, there are several significant hypothesis testing results. For instance, assumption H1, which claims that Branding Linkage has no substantial effect on Brand Equity, has been confirmed by a p value greater than 0.05 (p = 0.355), indicating that it is not significant. However, different outcomes are produced with image of the brand below 0.05 (p = 0.022). the same thing happens with other hypotheses such as H3, H4 and H5. Thus, the results of testing this hypothesis provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between ability variables in the proposed structural equation model.

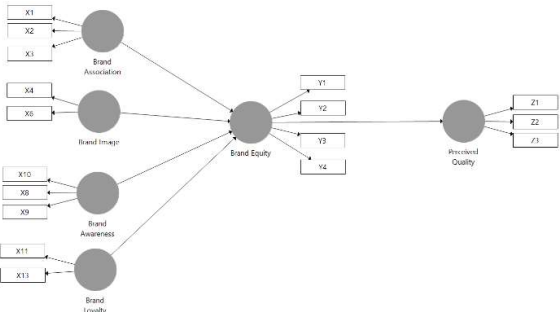


Fig 1. Moderation Effect

Managerial Implication

In research on the influence of Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty on Brand Equity through Perceived Quality, the "Implications" section refers to the practical and theoretical implications of the research results. These implications provide insight into how the research findings can be used in business practice, theory development, and strategic decision-making. The implications for Lintasarta are as follows

Brand Association Management

Strengthening Positive Brand Associations: Lintasarta must ensure that their brand associations reflect their desired values and qualities. For example, if Lintasarta wants to be known as a highly innovative and reliable service provider, they need to emphasise those elements in all communication materials and customer interactions. Collaboration Strategy: Building brand associations through partnerships with leading technology companies or participation in major projects can strengthen the brand image as an industry leader.

Brand Image Development

Brand Image Enhancement: Lintasarta should update and strengthen their brand image consistently with the quality of services provided. For example, improving the visual design and brand messaging to reflect the high quality and innovation offered. Marketing Campaign: Launching a marketing campaign that emphasises project successes and customer testimonials can help boost the brand image as a trusted and quality IT solutions provider.

Increase Brand Awareness

Targeted Marketing Strategy: Lintasarta needs to increase their brand awareness through effective advertising campaigns and digital marketing activities. Investing in SEO, SEM, and social media marketing can help reach a wider audience and increase brand visibility. Participation in Industry Events: Participating in technology exhibitions, seminars or conferences can assist Lintasarta in increasing brand awareness among industry professionals and potential clients.

Strengthen Brand Loyalty

Loyalty Programme: Implementing a loyalty programme for existing clients can increase their loyalty. For example, providing incentives or

rewards for long-term contracts or loyalty. Outstanding Customer Service: Focus on providing excellent customer service to strengthen relationships with customers and increase retention.

Focus on Perceived Quality

Service Quality Improvement: Since Perceived Quality acts as a mediator, Lintasarta should focus on improving their perceived service quality. This could involve improving infrastructure, training staff, and refining service processes. **Customer Feedback:** Collect and analyse customer feedback regularly to understand how service quality is perceived and areas that need improvement.

5. Conclusion

The results of research that have been conducted on the relationship of Brand Equity variables consisting of four dimensions (Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty) to the influence of Brand Equity through Perceived Quality, the conclusions of this study are as follows. Brand Association does not have a significant effect on Brand Equity, if the brand association does not match the core values or brand identity, consumers may not perceive a strong relationship between the association and the brand. For example, if Lintasarta is known as a reliable and high-quality information technology service provider, associations with attributes or characteristics that are irrelevant or contradictory to this image can damage brand perception. Then the results of Brand Image have a significant influence on Brand Equity, this shows that a unique and relevant brand image allows Crossarta to differentiate itself from other competitors. This helps brands to improve in a competitive market and attract the attention of consumers who choose products based on the identity and value that the brand represents. The results of Brand Awareness have an influence on Brand Equity so this shows the results of good Brand awareness will make consumers recognise the Lintasarta brand. The higher the level of recognition, the more likely consumers will choose that brand when making purchasing decisions. Then Brand Loyalty has significant results on Brand Equity consumers who have brand loyalty often have an emotional investment in the brand. They feel connected to the brand more deeply, which creates a stronger and more sustainable relationship. Thus, building strong brand loyalty is a key strategy for Crossarta to improve their overall brand equity. This not only strengthens the brand's position in the market, but also provides a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive industry. Meanwhile, Brand Equity through Perceived Quality is seen from the level of consumer satisfaction with Crossarta products or services. Consumers who are satisfied with product quality tend to be more loyal to the brand and consider the brand for future purchases.

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