

The Role of Brand Trust in Mediating the Relationship Between Brand Image and Brand Loyalty among Cosmetic Users

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand image and brand trust on brand loyalty among Somethinc cushion cosmetic users. With increasing competition in the cosmetics industry, it is important for companies to understand the factors that influence customer loyalty. The research method used is quantitative with data collection through questionnaires distributed to 140 respondents in the Greater Jakarta area. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the relationship between variables. The results show that brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand trust, which in turn has a positive impact on brand loyalty. This finding indicates that companies need to focus on developing a strong brand image and building consumer trust to increase loyalty. This study also identified that customer experience and product quality play an important role in shaping brand image and trust. The managerial implications of this study suggest companies to implement effective and sustainable marketing strategies to retain and attract more customers.

Keywords: *brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, cosmetics, PLS-SEM.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, cosmetics have become a crucial necessity for many people. This increased demand has led to a surge in the demand for beauty products. This development has led to the rapid growth of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia, as evidenced by the continued increase in the number of cosmetics users. According to Republika, the Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM) reported that the beauty industry in Indonesia experienced 21.9 percent growth in one year. In 2022, there were 913 companies in this sector, and this number increased to 1,010 by mid-2023.

In the cosmetics industry, there is a term “base makeup,” used to cover facial imperfections. Base makeup consists of three types: foundation, BB/CC cream, and most recently, cushion. Recently, many cushion products have emerged from various local beauty brands. According to beautynesia.id, a cushion is a portable base makeup product with packaging similar to powder but with a formulation similar to foundation and BB/CC cream.

Below is the sales data for the best-selling local cushion products for the period May 17-31, 2022.



Figure 1. Sales Data for Best-Selling Local Cushion Products May 17–31, 2022

Through online research, the Kompas Internal team managed to find sales data for the best-selling local cushions on Shopee and Tokopedia from May 17 to 31, 2022. Based on this data, Somethinc ranked first in the best-selling local cushion product category during that period. The beauty brand's slogan is “Be You, Be Something!” which boosted cushion sales by 58.11%. This locally colored cushion product is the SOMETHINC Hooman Breathable UV Protective Cushion Cover SPF 35 PA+++. This cushion product from Somethinc has become a mainstay among beauty lovers due to its emphasis on cushions that have a matte finish without clogging pores.

Quoting from Kumparan.com, Somethinc is a local skincare brand founded in 2019. The figure behind Somethinc is Irene Ursula, who serves as the founder and CEO. Irene has been involved in the Indonesian beauty industry since 2014 and is well-known to beauty lovers throughout Indonesia. Its success means that each product is manufactured to the highest standards through research and development, testing, certification, and the latest ingredients and technology. All Somethinc products are Halal-certified.

Although it ranked number one in local best-selling cushions on Shopee and Tokopedia in 2022, consumer reviews indicate that some customers have expressed dissatisfaction with Somethinc's cushion cosmetics. These customers' experiences using Somethinc's cushion products can be found on Female Daily, an online platform serving the women's community, particularly in Indonesia. This site provides a variety of information, beauty product reviews, and discussions on topics such as beauty, health, lifestyle, and fashion. Female Daily also has a forum where members can share experiences, tips, and recommendations regarding beauty and personal care products.

Below are reviews of customers' experiences using Somethinc's cushion cosmetics:

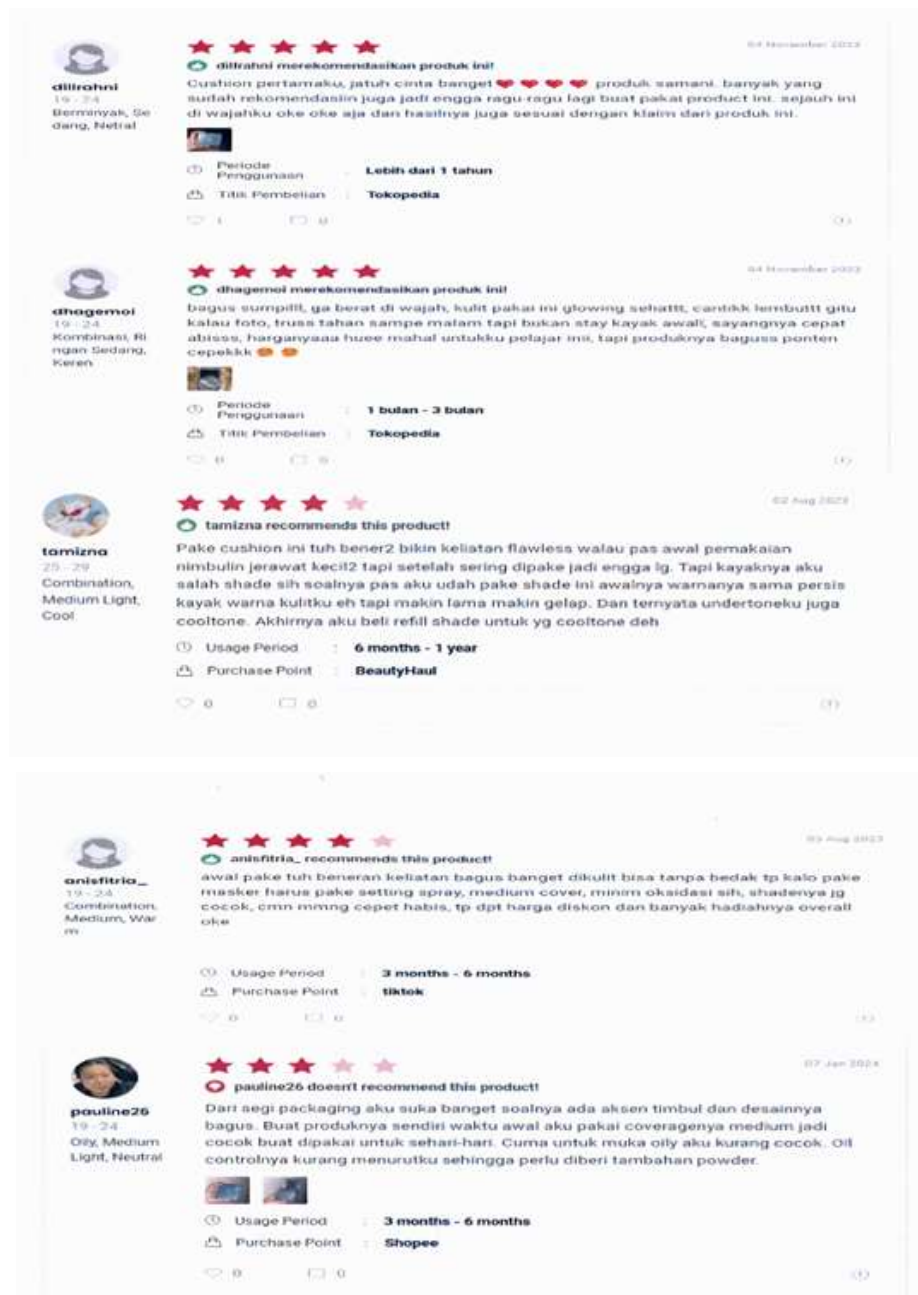


Figure 2. Female Daily Review Results for the Something Cushion Cosmetic Product

Source: <https://reviews.femaledaily.com/>

Figure 2 shows consumers who are satisfied and dissatisfied with the Something Cushion cosmetic product. This is evidenced by consumers who gave this product a rating of 1-5. Based on Figure 2, the customer experience evaluation shows that consumers 1 and 2 are satisfied with the Something Cushion product, while consumers 3, 4, and 5 are dissatisfied with the product. This is evident from the reviews and ratings given, which are less than satisfactory. This consumer experience will then impact brand loyalty.

According to Bagus Anggra Pramuda Kusuma & Putu Mariatan (2018), brand loyalty is a measure of how loyal a customer is to a brand. Customers who consistently use a particular brand rather than purchasing other brands, especially when the product price, design, or material changes, are more loyal to that brand. Brand equity is influenced by brand image, which is a key driving force influencing consumer behavior. Consumer decisions to purchase a product are influenced by brand image. According to Zhang (2015), consumers tend to consider a product's brand image before purchasing. If a brand has a positive image compared to other brands, consumers will purchase that brand's products.

The following are the results of previous research, including the study by Rizwan et al. (2012) entitled "The Influence of Brand Image and Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty of Teh Botol Sosro." This study, conducted using SPSS 16 software for data analysis, found that Teh Botol Sosro's brand image significantly influenced attitudes toward bottled beverages, having a positive and significant effect on consumer loyalty to the brand.

Previous research by Cardoso et al. (2022) on trust and loyalty in building brands with customers in retail outlets in Northern Brazil found that trust has a positive influence on loyalty. This means that a high level of trust in a brand can increase customer loyalty to that brand. This study's focus is limited to retail chains in northern Brazil. Therefore, the findings may not be directly applicable to other business contexts or geographic regions, or to variations in cultural, economic, and social factors that may influence the relationship between trust, loyalty, and brand loyalty.

Referring to previous research, it can be concluded that brand image and trust are key factors in determining customer loyalty. A positive brand image and trust will encourage customers to remain loyal to a brand. Somethinc Cushion Cosmetics faces challenges due to competition in the cosmetics market. Numerous cosmetic companies are creating intense competition in both domestic and international markets. Although Somethinc Cushion became the best-selling local cushion product on Shopee and Tokopedia in 2022, consumer reviews indicate that some customers still had unsatisfactory experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the influence of brand image and brand trust on brand loyalty among Somethinc cushion cosmetic users. Furthermore, this study also aims to examine the role of brand satisfaction as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty. It is hoped that this research will help companies develop better marketing strategies. By understanding the factors that influence customer loyalty, companies can improve their marketing strategies to retain and attract more customers.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is quantitative-deductive, and data collection involved distributing an online questionnaire created using Google Forms. The questionnaire was then evaluated using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 points, with the following options: strongly disagree (STS), disagree (TS), neutral (N), agree (S), and strongly agree (SS). The brand image variable consisted of six statements, brand trust consisted of six statements, and brand loyalty consisted of eight statements adapted from Cardoso et al. (2022), resulting in a total of 20 questions.

The population used in this study was customers or users of Somethinc Cushion cosmetics in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek). The sampling method used was non-probability sampling, with data drawn using purposive sampling. The criteria used included respondents who used Somethinc Cushion cosmetics, were aged between 17 and 50, had made two purchases in the past year, and resided in the Greater Jakarta area. According to Hair et al. (2019), the number of respondents is multiplied by 7 (20x7), resulting in a total of 140 respondents. This study will distribute an initial questionnaire to 30 respondents as a pretest. After collecting the pretest questionnaire data, the data will be tested for validity and reliability using factor analysis using SPSS.

To analyze the data in this study, the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) method was used. This method tests both the outer model and the inner model. Testing using the inner model, or structural model testing, reveals the relationship between constructs, evaluated using R-square, Q-square, and path analysis. Testing using the outer model demonstrates how the measured variables represent the constructs, demonstrating the relationship between the constructs and the variable indicators. There are two types of outer model testing: validity and reliability.

The researchers tested the validity and reliability using factor analysis using SPSS. KMO and MSA values greater than 0.5 indicate the appropriateness of the factor analysis. Then, for the reliability test using Crinbach's Alpha, the higher the value is approaching 1, the better the reliability test is (Hair et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing of the Research Model

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statement	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistic	P Values	Conclusion
H1	Brand trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty	0,435	3,068	0,002	Accepted
H2	Brand image has an effect on brand loyalty	0,482	3,597	0,000	Accepted
H3	Brand image has an effect on brand trust	0,683	8,035	0,000	Accepted
H4	Brand trust mediates the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty	0,297	2,506	0,012	Accepted

Evaluating the direct influence data shows that 4 hypotheses are accepted. Testing H1, the influence of brand trust on brand loyalty has an original sample value (O) of 0.435; T statistic 3.068; and P value 0.002 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that brand trust has a positive influence on brand loyalty, so H1 can be accepted. Testing H2, the influence of brand image on brand loyalty has an original sample value (O) of 0.482; T statistic 3.597; and P values 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand loyalty, so H2 can be accepted. Testing H3, the influence of brand image on brand trust has an original sample value (O) of 0.683; T

statistic 8.035; and P values $0.000 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that brand image has a positive and significant influence on brand trust, so H3 can be accepted. Testing H4, the effect of brand image on brand loyalty through brand trust as a mediator had an original sample (O) value of 0.297; a T statistic of 2.506; and a P value of $0.012 < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that brand trust mediates the effect of brand image on brand loyalty, thus H4 is accepted. The mediating role of brand trust in H4 is partial mediation, due to the direct effect of brand image on brand loyalty, with a higher significance value than its indirect effect.

This study aims to determine the influence of brand trust and brand image on brand loyalty among Somethinc cushion cosmetic users in Greater Jakarta. Based on the hypothesis testing conducted, H1, H2, H3, and H4 support the hypothesis.

First, the results of this study indicate that brand trust has a positive effect on brand loyalty. These results support previous research conducted by (Cardoso et al., 2022), (Negabo et al., 2021), and (Enggono et al., 2019), which suggests that brand trust plays a crucial role in brand sustainability. If consumers lose trust in a brand, it will struggle to grow in the market. Conversely, if consumer trust in a brand grows, it will continue to grow and gain a larger market share. Consumers who are satisfied with a product tend to remain loyal and make repeat purchases. A connection to the product and trust in its performance also strengthen loyalty. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were aged 17–27, which is why they are more likely to associate personal feelings or emotions when using a product. College students who have a high level of trust in Somethinc, based on the perception that the brand operates with honesty and integrity, feel protected and confident that the products purchased from Somethinc are safe to use and live up to the brand's claims.

The second result of this research hypothesis indicates that brand image has a significant influence on brand loyalty. A good brand image not only increases consumer confidence but can also influence purchasing behavior and loyalty. Research (Prawira & Setiawan, 2021) and (Valimayanti et al., 2022) shows that a positive brand image has a significant impact on consumer loyalty, as seen for the Nike and Bibli.com brands. Furthermore, a positive brand image is also formed through a commitment to quality and credibility, as found for the Dewa brand in the study (Miati et al., 2020). Respondents aged 17–27 who are students play a significant role in transactions and brand image in the market. They are at a very active age phase in consuming information, building self-identity, and have a strong social influence in their environment. In this age range, brands tend to be more responsive to marketing strategies and are more interested in interacting with brands, whether through social media, direct communication, or offline activities. As a generation growing up in the digital era, they have greater access to and broader information about brands and brand images, so they tend to form brand perceptions more quickly and are more critical in assessing product integrity and quality. When a brand has a positive image, such as a strong reputation, good service, and values that align with their own, consumers are more likely to retain that brand over the long term. Furthermore, because students are often leaders in their communities, their opinions and recommendations about a brand can influence others around them, strengthening the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty.

The next result, in the third hypothesis, shows that brand image has a positive effect on brand trust. Consumers tend to compare various brands and choose products with a good brand image. Trust in a brand is an important factor in purchasing decisions, because

a brand with a positive image is considered a guarantee of product quality. Research (Bastian, 2014) and (Anjani, 2017) show that a good brand image increases consumer trust, as seen in the Adidas and Revlon Lipstick brands. Respondents aged 17–27 who are students or college students have an important role in the interaction between brand image and brand trust because they are at a stage of life where they are actively building their personal identity and values. At this age, students or college students tend to be more sensitive to brand image and more critical in assessing whether the brand is in line with their values, lifestyle, and personality. In addition, they are often faced with various social discussions about brands, whether through social media, communities, or campus environments, so their trust in a brand can be influenced by the opinions and recommendations of others. Therefore, ensuring a consistent and relevant brand image for this age group is crucial for building consumer trust.

The fourth finding shows that brand trust can mediate the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty. This finding is supported by research conducted by Nataniel (2019), which found that brand image positively impacts customer loyalty through customer trust in the brand. Research conducted by Putra & Sulistiyawati (2019) found that brand trust, as a mediator of brand image, significantly correlates with customer loyalty. The relationship between brand image and brand loyalty can be influenced by brand trust, as brand trust plays a crucial role in building a strong relationship between consumers and brands. When consumers have a positive perception of a brand, they naturally feel safe and comfortable, which can increase consumer satisfaction. Consumer trust in the brand will thrive. This trust instills a sense of security and confidence in consumer purchasing decisions, thereby increasing consumer loyalty to the brand. Consequently, brand trust acts as a crucial link connecting brand image and brand loyalty, ensuring that positive brand perceptions result in long-term consumer loyalty.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully demonstrated a significant influence between brand trust and brand image on brand loyalty for Somethinc cushion cosmetic products in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek). Brand trust is crucial for creating a sense of security and confidence in customers' use of certain products. Ultimately, this trust drives customer loyalty to that brand. Furthermore, a strong brand image influences repeat purchasing behavior because a brand with a good reputation and consistent with brand expectations. Superior product quality creates a sense of comfort and satisfaction when using the product, which is reflected in the emotional experience of customers who feel happy and confident when using the product.

This study still has several limitations that need to be addressed. First, this study only examined one Somethinc cushion cosmetic product. Second, this study only involved Somethinc cushion cosmetic users in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek), so these results cannot be generalized to other cosmetic products. Third, this study was conducted at a specific point in time, so its findings may become irrelevant if market changes occur in the future. Given that this study focused on the Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) area, it is recommended to expand the scope of the study to other regions in Indonesia to obtain a more comprehensive picture of brand loyalty across various demographics. Further research could be conducted to explore other factors influencing brand loyalty, such as

customer experience, after-sales service, and cultural factors that may influence various market segments. Additionally, consider adding other variables, such as brand satisfaction and customer engagement, that may influence brand loyalty.

This study has several managerial implications. It emphasizes the importance of product innovation and strengthening brand image for Somethinc to increase customer loyalty. Companies need to consistently develop and improve their products based on customer feedback so that the products offered consistently meet or even exceed consumer expectations. Responsive customer service and transparent communication are key to maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, an effective marketing strategy is also crucial in strengthening brand image. Somethinc is recommended to involve influencers, customer testimonials, and content that highlights product advantages. A strong brand image will help attract more new customers while retaining existing ones. Proactively managing customer reviews and feedback will help the company make necessary adjustments according to market needs.

Furthermore, Somethinc can consider developing a loyalty program as a way to strengthen customer relationships. Such a program not only increases customer retention but also provides added value that encourages customers to continue interacting with the brand. Furthermore, the company is also advised to explore market expansion opportunities to other regions to broaden its business reach. Finally, to maintain competitiveness and relevance in a dynamic market, Somethinc needs to conduct further research to identify additional factors that influence brand loyalty across various contexts. With these steps, the company can continue to grow and provide greater value to consumers in the long term.

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