

# The Effect of Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness, and Brand Association in Building Brand Loyalty Among Young Consumers

Nyimas Latifah Azzahra<sup>1</sup>, Angga Febrian<sup>2</sup>, Dafa Rafif Pratama<sup>3</sup>, Arif Ainun Na'im<sup>4</sup>, M. Wildhan AR Mawardi<sup>5</sup>

{nysfahra@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, angga.febrian@feb.unila.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, dafarafifpratama@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>, arifainunn@gmail.com<sup>4</sup>, muhammadwildhan0@gmail.com<sup>5</sup>}

Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Ir. Sumantri Brojonegoro No.1, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association in creating brand loyalty among consumers. Data from 100 consumers were analyzed quantitatively. Questionnaire survey data were processed using the SmartPLS 4.0 structural equation modeling approach. Empirical results prove that perceived quality has a significant effect on brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty. Apart from perceived quality, brand awareness also has a strong influence on building brand loyalty to consumers. Brand awareness and brand loyalty can be achieved by improving the quality of products offered to consumers. However, the findings explain that brand association with luxury brands does not have a positive effect on brand loyalty. Input related to the influence of the relationship between perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association on brand loyalty among young consumers can help marketers to plan and formulate strategies that can increase young consumers' loyalty to a brand to achieve the goal of creating a sustainable business, especially in industrial markets that target young people as consumers. Empirical findings provide insight into the behavior of young consumers in response to product purchasing activities at a brand.

**Keywords:** perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, young consumers.

## 1 Introduction

In today's modern era, a successful business can be seen from the creation of brands that have managed to maintain their distinctive image to maintain the competitive advantage of their products in the market (Aaker, 1991; Pappu et al., 2005). A brand is a valuable asset for a company because it becomes a consumer tool in making purchasing decisions for a product by minimizing problems related to the shopping experience and trust in product quality in a brand (Aaker, 1991; Chung et al., 2013; Emari et al., 2012; Y. Huang & Huddleston, 2009; Kremer & Viot, 2012). Related to consumer trust, brand equity can increase consumer shopping loyalty and even consumers can be willing to pay high product prices for a brand (Lassar et al., 1995).

Brand equity refers to a set of assets and liabilities of a product (product/brand name and symbol) and can increase or even decrease the value of the product (Sugiarto et al., 2004). (Aaker, 1991) linking brand loyalty as a dimension of brand equity to the added value of a brand (Oh et al., 2020), and this branding phenomenon will develop from time to time so that it is

considered a dynamic concept (Luciano et al., 2018). This is due to personal experience with a product to build strong associations so that consumers can build meaning towards the brand in various ways (Keller, 2020; Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Schmitt, 2012).

This dynamic concept can lead to young consumers who have a proactive and innovative spirit toward the product they want (Roberta, 2004). Changes in consumption patterns for young consumers are very clear along with the times and this is built by values in certain orientations and identities that can influence changes in buying behavior for young consumers (Codeluppi, 2002; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Platania et al., 2012). Based on this, the research aims to determine the effect of the relationship between perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association in building brand loyalty among young consumers.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Perceived Quality**

Perceived quality is the top-ranked asset identified as being able to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Perceived quality is also one of the things that contribute to obtaining a return on investment that has been made by a company (Aaker, 1992). Increased consumer demand can be influenced by an increase in the quality of a product (Laffont & Tirole, 1993). This quality is the main thing in building a brand reputation (Garvin, 1987). Perceived quality is related to actual buying behavior on brand loyalty due to experimental interest so the quality perceived by consumers can be a key factor in determining consumer choices (Jacoby, 1971; Olson & Jacoby, 1972; Zeithaml, 1988).

Perceived quality has shown that a brand becomes more selective in the minds of consumers due to consumers' evaluation of product benefits and subjective feelings about the quality of a product (Aaker, 1991; Dodds et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). Previous research has also revealed that there is a relationship between perceived quality and consumer loyalty to a brand or brand loyalty (Aydin & Özer, 2005). Based on the previous statement, the following hypotheses will be developed in this study:

**H1:** perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness

**H2:** perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on brand association

**H3:** perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty

### **2.2 Brand Awareness**

The ability of consumers to remember or recognize the existence of a brand in certain situations is known as brand awareness. Brand awareness is created by the memory and recognition of a brand to consumers (Aaker, 1996). Consumers will easily identify brands such as consumers who think of a particular brand when buying a product. Thus, the brand name becomes the most important element for creating brand awareness in consumer memory because the brand name will easily make consumers identify the services to be provided (Davis et al., 2008; Herbig & Milewicz, 1995; Hoefler & Keller, 2002; Janiszewski & Van Osselaer, 2000; Turley & Moore, 1995).

Brand awareness can influence consumer decision making significantly. In general, consumers will use brand awareness as a heuristic for a product purchase decision (Chung et al., 2013; R. Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012; Suki, 2013). Meanwhile, no research states that brand awareness can affect brand loyalty. Therefore, this study will make a hypothesis related to this statement as follows:

**H4:** brand awareness has a positive effect on brand loyalty

### **2.3 Brand Association**

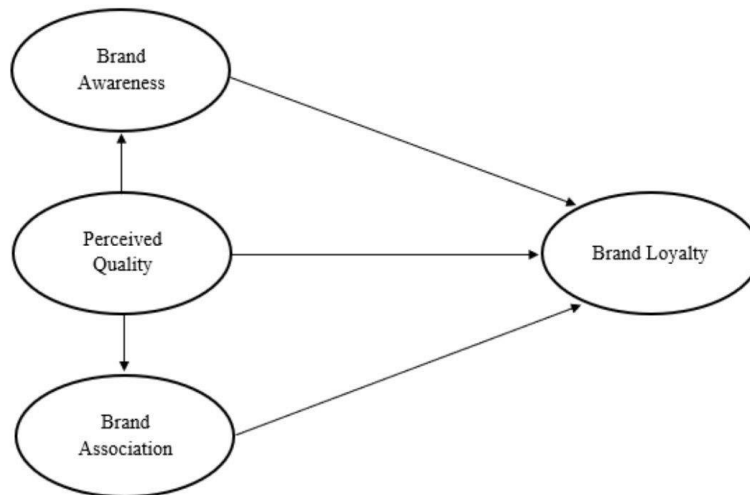
Brand association is a collection of information with brand names in consumer memory. The brand association also reflects the brand image (Fuller et al., 2023; Keller, 1993). Information that is embedded in the minds of consumers either positively or negatively will be connected to their memories. This can make the brand association a tool to differentiate brands (Emari et al., 2012; Van Osselaer & Janiszewski, 2001). The higher the brand association with a product, the more it will be remembered by consumers so and this can increase brand loyalty to consumers (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). Therefore, in this study, the following hypotheses will be developed:

**H5:** brand association has a positive effect on brand loyalty

### **2.4 Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is a behavior towards repeated product purchases that involve a tendency towards emotive, evaluative, or biased behavior towards a brand (Sheth & Park, 1974). The behavior of consumers who make purchases repeatedly on a product and consumer attitudes towards a psychological commitment to a brand will build brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Assael, 1998; Oliver, 1999; Prus & Randall, 1995). Brand loyalty is not assessed from the frequency of purchases, but rather the convenience of the preferred product or behavior to seek variations in purchasing certain products (Tseng et al., 2004). Consumers become loyal to a brand if consumers can create a positive attitude toward the brand because of a brand preference over other brands (Atilgan et al., 2005; Binninger, 2008; Severi & Ling, 2013; Vogel et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2014). Therefore, brand loyalty is the ultimate goal of brand management. The company will test how strong or weak the loyalty attitude of its customers is. The company will also regularly review products that are still preferred by consumers by paying attention to competitor products that are preferred by consumers in similar industrial markets (Aaker, 1996).

From the theory that has been previously described, these statements can form the framework of this research as follows:



**Fig. 1.** Researche Framework

### 3 Methods

This study uses an online questionnaire survey to examine the results of young consumers' knowledge regarding perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association which can influence brand loyalty as a response to their shopping. Young consumers in Indonesia who have shopping experience are the unit of analysis in this study. This study applied a simple random sampling technique. In its distribution, the questionnaires were distributed using social media networks on the internet which were distributed to students and high school/equivalent students randomly located in various regions of each island in Indonesia, namely Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. The total data collected during the data collection process, 100 respondents will be analyzed using PLS-SEM software (SmartPLS 4.0) and the participation of respondents in the questionnaire is purely voluntary. The size of the sample that has been collected is acceptable as it falls within the range of 30-500 samples which can be considered satisfactory (Roscoe, 1975).

This questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale to measure the data that has been obtained. This assessment starts from 'strongly disagree' which is represented by point 1, 'disagree' which is represented by point 2, 'neutral' which is represented by point 3, 'agree' which is represented by point 4, to point 5 which represents 'very much agree'. In this survey, it was found that 92% of female respondents and 8% of male respondents had shopping experiences with an awareness of perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association of a product offered by a company to achieve the ultimate goal of brand management, namely brand loyalty.

#### 3.1 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. There were 92% female respondents and 8% male respondents, most of whom came from Lampung Province. This can show that young male consumers are starting to realize and recognize the existence of products in a brand that can influence their shopping decisions. Young consumers who were respondents to the survey via this questionnaire were 67% aged 15-19 years, 33% aged 20-25 years. While the respondents involved in this questionnaire were students with a percentage of 85% from either undergraduate (S1) or diploma programs (D3/D4) and as much as 15% from high school students/equivalent. The existence of respondents from among students has shown that young consumers from among students begin to know the existence of products and recognize them to determine product purchasing decisions on a brand.

**Table 1.** The demographic characteristics of the respondents

Description	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	92	92%
	Male	8	8%
Age	15-19 years	67	67%
	20-25 years	33	33%
Domicile	Lampung	67	67%
	West Java	7	7%
	East Java	7	7%
	Central Java	5	5%
	Banten	4	4%
	South Sumatera	3	3%
	DKI Jakarta	1	1%
	DI Yogyakarta	1	1%
	West Kalimantan	1	1%
	South Sulawesi	1	1%
	South Papua	1	1%
	North Sumatera	1	1%
	Bengkulu	1	1%
Education	High School/ equivalent	15	15%
	Bachelor (S1)	82	82%
	Diploma (D3/D4)	3	3%

This survey also shows that young consumers are starting to become aware of the existence of a product in a brand since the introduction of the product through e-commerce which ranks at the top with a percentage of 73%, advertisements or information services on Instagram with a percentage of 68% can also help increase awareness of young consumers. to products on a brand and the top ranking is then followed by obtaining information on recommendations from friends with a total percentage of 56%. Other information that helps make young consumers aware of products on a brand is obtained from family or relatives, neighbors, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, festivals or bazaars, brochures, advertisements on television or YouTube, billboards, and products found in stores. or specific market. This is shown by the presentation in the following table:

**Table 2.** Sources of information regarding the existence of a product on a brand

Description	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	E-commerce	74	74%

Sources of information obtained regarding the existence of a product on a brand	Instagram	68	68%
	Friends	56	56%
	Family or relatives	37	37%
	Neighbor	8	8%
	TikTok	39	39%
	Twitter	17	17%
	Advertisements on television	24	24%
	Facebook	6	6%
	Festival or bazar	9	9%
	Brochure	8	8%
	Billboard	10	10%
	Shops, stalls, markets	13	13%
	Ads on YouTube	1	1%

Furthermore, the data that has been collected will be tested regarding the construct and convergent validity. Table 3. has shown the results of main loading and cross-loading. Items that have a load value above 0.5 are significant cross-loading items. In Table 3 some items have a value greater than 0.5, so this indicates that these items have significant construct validity. Whereas in Table 4 there is Composite Reliability (CR) which has a value for each construct between 0.845 and 0.858 which has exceeded the standard value, which is equal to 0.7. Meanwhile, the value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is in the range of 0.504 to 0.645 which exceeds the minimum standard value of 0.5. CR values that exceed 0.7 means that the construct of the hypothetical model can be measured consistently with the items in this study. And an AVE value that is greater than 0.5 means that the variance of the indicator can be explained by more than half of the construct (Hair Jr. et al., 2021).

**Table 3.** Loadings dan cross-loading

Items	Brand Association	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty	Perceived Quality
BAS 1	<b>0.763</b>	0.428	0.291	0.276
BAS 3	<b>0.773</b>	0.310	0.227	0.320
BAS 4	<b>0.870</b>	0.423	0.383	0.332
BAW 1	0.378	<b>0.737</b>	0.439	0.384
BAW 2	0.296	<b>0.753</b>	0.411	0.383
BAW 3	0.450	<b>0.811</b>	0.558	0.527
BAW 4	0.349	<b>0.773</b>	0.554	0.494
LOY 1	0.304	0.592	<b>0.804</b>	0.573
LOY 2	0.293	0.474	<b>0.781</b>	0.395
LOY 3	0.398	0.488	<b>0.751</b>	0.487
LOY 4	0.176	0.430	<b>0.761</b>	0.480
PQ 1	0.220	0.425	0.528	<b>0.652</b>
PQ 4	0.180	0.375	0.432	<b>0.702</b>
PQ 5	0.369	0.544	0.532	<b>0.833</b>
PQ 6	0.393	0.454	0.417	<b>0.757</b>
PQ 7	0.221	0.363	0.429	<b>0.697</b>
PQ 8	0.208	0.301	0.315	<b>0.593</b>

**Table 4.** Measurement of convergent validity

Construct	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
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<b>Brand Association</b>		0.725	0.845	0.645
BAS 1: The product characteristics of "Brand X" come to mind very quickly	0.763			
BAS 3 : The price of "Brand X" products is very affordable	0.773			
BAS 4 : "Brand X" products are known to be expensive, but the quality of the products cannot be doubted	0.870			
<b>Brand Awareness</b>		0.772	0.852	0.591
BAW 1 : The brand name "Brand X" is very famous	0.737			
BAW 2 : I can easily find the whereabouts of "Brand X" products around me	0.753			
BAW 3 : I know the product characteristics of "Brand X" well	0.811			
BAW 4 : It is easy for me to distinguish the characteristics of "Brand X" products from similar products from other brands	0.773			
<b>Brand Loyalty</b>		0.779	0.857	0.600
LOY 1 : I would recommend buying "Brand X" products to other people	0.804			
LOY 2 : I make the product "Brand X" as the main choice over similar products at other brands	0.781			
LOY 3 : Even though the price of "Brand X" products is more expensive than similar products at other brands, I will still buy "Brand X" products because the quality is guaranteed	0.751			
LOY 4 : I will talk about positive things related to "Brand X"	0.761			
<b>Perceived Quality</b>		0.801	0.858	0.504
PQ 1 : "Brand X" products are varied, they provide many choices that suit my taste	0.652			
PQ 4: "Brand X" products are of good quality (such as delicious and nutritious food in the culinary business, durable and sturdy in the furniture business, etc.)	0.702			
PQ 5 : The product "Brand X" provides many benefits and advantages so that I don't feel any loss after buying the product	0.833			
PQ 6 : The packaging of "Brand X" products is very neat and clean	0.757			
PQ 7 : "Brand X" has a product that, if seen in plain view, can attract attention to be able to visit the store or even be				

spontaneously interested in buying the product  
 PQ 8 : If there are responses, criticisms and suggestions from buyers regarding a product or service "Brand X", "Brand X" can respond properly to this 0.593

All constructs are divided by the square root of the AVE which is larger than the construct (Hair Jr. et al., 2021). As shown in Table 5 below, item values are stronger among the constructs themselves in a model. This indicates that all constructs on brand association, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality have sufficient discriminant validity.

**Table 5.** Construct discriminant validity

Model Construct	Brand Association	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty	Perceived Quality
Brand Association				
Brand Awareness	0.636			
Brand Loyalty	0.493	0.810		
Perceived Quality	0.490	0.721	0.779	

Statistical significance can be applied using the bootstrap method. A total of 4999 bootstrap samples were tested for 100 cases in this study. The one-sided crisis value is used to analyze the case with a value of 1.65 for a significant level of 5% and 2.33 for a significant level of 1% (Hair Jr. et al., 2021). The results of the analysis in this assessment obtained from the path analysis obtained the R-square value for brand loyalty amounting to 0.516. This indicates that the brand loyalty variant of 51.6% can be explained by perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association so the results of testing this hypothesis obtained as many as four hypotheses are supported, namely H1, H2, H3 and H4. Meanwhile the other hypothesis, namely H5 is rejected.

**Table 6.** Path coefficients and hypothesis testing from bootstrapping results

Hypothesis	Direct Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	P-value	Results
H1	perceived quality -> brand awareness	0.591	9.822	0.000	Supported
H2	perceived quality -> brand association	0.385	4.690	0.000	Supported
H3	perceived quality -> brand loyalty	0.377	4.279	0.000	Supported
H4	brand awareness -> brand loyalty	0.405	4.183	0.000	Supported
H5	brand association -> brand loyalty	0.040	0.508	0.611	Not Supported



## 4 Discussion and Study Implications

This study found a positive relationship between perceived quality and brand awareness as hypothesized in H1. This hypothesis is supported by the results of research from (Grewal et al., 1998). The existence of a positive and significant relationship between perceived quality and brand awareness in this study shows that today's young consumers can recognize, remember, and know the characteristics of a brand from the appearance of attractive products, the existence of benefits and high-quality offers, product variety, product packaging that is kept clean and tidy, or even the provision of customer-friendly services by a business. This is related to other research which states that high brand awareness can be maintained along with the higher perceived quality provided by a company as studied by previous researchers (Dodds et al., 1991; Lo, 2002; Wall et al., 1991). As with brand awareness, perceived quality has a positive and significant relationship with the brand association as has been hypothesized in H2. This can happen because there is a close relationship between brand awareness and brand association so if perceived quality has a positive effect on brand awareness, then perceived quality will also have a positive effect on brand association. And this statement is supported by previous researchers (Atilgan et al., 2005; Pappu et al., 2005).

Perceived quality is one dimension of brand equity. That is why the relationship between perceived quality and brand loyalty is strong, as has been hypothesized in H3 which proves that perceived quality and brand loyalty have a positive and significant relationship. In this study, young consumers who have positive buying behavior towards a product at a certain brand can be influenced by perceived quality. The perceived quality that is known by young consumers will motivate them to subscribe to the products offered by the same brand. This statement is supported by previous researchers who stated that perceived quality will affect consumers towards brand loyalty so companies are competing to develop brand loyalty in the products they sell by increasing high product quality (Aaker, 1996; Khan et al., 2019; Olsen, 2002).

Brand awareness has a strong influence on brand loyalty as hypothesized in H4. A company will increase brand awareness of the products it sells by expanding its products and markets to get the best results. And therefore, brand awareness has a positive relationship to brand loyalty because increasing brand awareness to get the best results is in line with the ultimate goal of brand management, namely brand loyalty. This has been investigated by previous researchers who also stated that brand awareness has a positive effect on brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Peng, 2006; Wu, 2007).

What is surprising in this study is that brand association does not have a positive effect on brand loyalty as confirmed in the results of the H5 hypothesis test. The results of this analysis contradict those of previous researchers who stated that brand association and brand loyalty have a positive relationship. These findings state that brand association shows positive behavior toward brand loyalty. Even brand association can influence the behavior of consumers who have loyalty to a luxury brand. And this is the discovery of (Ahn et al., 2018; Bae et al., 2020; Tenenhaus et al., 2005). However, in this study, no positive results were found between brand association and brand loyalty toward luxury product brands among young consumers. This shows that young consumers already know the characteristics of a luxury brand that has high quality. However, a luxury product in a certain brand cannot easily decide that he will subscribe to a brand that sells these luxury goods.

## 5 Conclusions

Studies in this research have discussed and tested the effect of perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association on brand loyalty as a response to product purchases among young consumers. The results reveal that perceived quality can influence brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty. In addition, brand awareness can also affect brand loyalty performance which can be evaluated against the attainment of goals for brand management. But besides that, a brand association cannot affect brand loyalty performance if young consumers are offered luxury products even though the product quality is guaranteed.

From this study, it is also known that a brand can be easily recognized by young consumers because of an increase in product quality so that people around them recommend that the product they have used is suitable for use by others too. In addition, the study found that the dissemination of product information on the brand by utilizing social media networks to increase and disseminate brand awareness to consumers. So that in this study it can be concluded that building brand loyalty can strengthen other elements of brand equity, especially in improving the quality of products or services provided and expanding brand awareness.

## 6 Limitations

There are several limitations of the research, namely the lack of scope for dissemination of a more comprehensive questionnaire. In addition, some respondents were not serious in answering the questions. This is likely to occur due to lack of time or interest in answering all the questions that have been given so that the level of accuracy in answering these questions cannot be maintained by the relevant respondents so that this can make a difference within certain limits to be able to formulate better conclusions. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to create a probability sampling frame and expand the sample size so that it can help solve problems in generalizing the research results.

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