

The Effect of Integrated Marketing Communication on Brand Equity for Mixue Consumers in Lhokseumawe City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) on Brand Equity for Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City. The background of this research is based on the importance of integrated marketing communication in building strong brand perceptions in the midst of increasingly competitive business competition. The research method used is quantitative with a descriptive approach and simple linear regression analysis. The research sample amounted to 100 respondents who were determined using the Lemeshow formula. The results of the analysis show that Integrated Marketing Communication has a positive and significant effect on Brand Equity Mixue. This is evidenced by the t-count value of 10.025 which is greater than the t-table of 1.984 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This finding shows that Mixue's consistent communication strategy through various channels, especially social media, is effective in increasing brand recognition and positive consumer perceptions. The mean value of the IMC variable is 3.98 and Brand Equity is 4.09, both of which fall into the "agree" category. The most prominent aspect of IMC is social media advertisements that attract consumers' attention, while from Brand Equity is the recognition of Mixue's logo and packaging. However, consumers' emotional attachment to the brand is still relatively low, so it needs to be improved through a more personalized and emotional strategy. This research reinforces the theory that integrated marketing communications play an important role in building and maintaining brand equity in the minds of consumers.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the food and beverage industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth in recent years, along with the increasing purchasing power of the public and changes in lifestyle, especially among the younger generation. Ice cream, as part of a lifestyle product, not only serves as a dessert, but also symbolizes culinary trends that are heavily influenced by social media presence. This phenomenon creates its own challenges for companies in building marketing strategies that are able to attract and maintain consumer loyalty in the midst of increasingly competitive competition.

In facing these market dynamics, companies are required to implement effective and integrated marketing communication strategies. One widely used approach is Integrated Marketing Communication

(IMC), which combines various communication elements such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. This strategy is considered capable of creating message consistency and strengthening brand position in the minds of consumers (Darmawangsa, 2015). In this context, the role of brand equity becomes very important as an intangible asset that can increase the added value of a product or service (Aaker in Vipta, 2015).

Mixue, as one of the ice cream and beverage brands from China, has successfully expanded its network aggressively in various cities in Indonesia, including in Lhokseuma City. Mixue's marketing strategy is seen through the selection of strategic locations, affordable prices, and the use of social media and creative promotions to reach the teen and young adult segments. Based on a pre-study of 30 respondents, the majority of consumers recognize Mixue through social media and feel attracted to its promotions and strong brand identity. In addition, most respondents expressed satisfaction with Mixue's services and recommended it to others, indicating that customer loyalty is starting to form.

However, there are several problems that need to be studied further. First, the effectiveness of each of Mixue's IMC elements-such as the specific role of social media, sales promotion, and public relations-in shaping brand equity is unknown. Secondly, although short-term promotions such as discounts and bundling can attract consumers, their contribution to long-term loyalty has not been confirmed. Third, while Mixue's brand identity is perceived as strong, it is worth analyzing what visual or emotional elements influence this perception. Finally, although most consumers expressed satisfaction with the service, there are still 20% of respondents who are not satisfied, which indicates the need for continuous improvement in service quality.

With this background, this study aims to analyze the effect of integrated marketing communication (IMC) on brand equity and customer satisfaction of Mixue in Lhokseumawe City. The results of this study are expected to make theoretical and practical contributions in the development of brand marketing strategies in the increasingly competitive food and beverage industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) (X)

Integrated Marketing Communication or Integrated Marketing Communication according to Dr. M. Anang Firmansyah, SE, (2020) is defined as a marketing communication planning concept with the added value of an in-depth plan testing the role of strategies with various communication disciplines such as general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and then combining all of these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact

IMC indicators according to Dr. M. Anang Firmansyah, SE, (2020):

1. Advertising (advertising)
2. Sales Promotion
3. Public Relations
4. Personal Selling
5. Direct Marketing

Brand Equity (Y)

Brand equity according to David A Aaker, (2014) is a set of associations and behaviors owned by brand customers, distribution channel members, and companies that enable a brand to gain strength, durability, and superiority that differentiates it from competitors

Brand Equity Indicators David A Aaker, (2014)

1. Brand Awareness
2. Brand Association
3. Perceived Quality
4. Brand Loyalty

RESEARCH METHOD

The research location chosen in this study is Mixue Lhokseumawe City Jl. Merdeka Barat, Kec. Banda Sakti, Lhokseumawe City, Aceh. This location was chosen because Mixue is one of the fastest growing brands in Indonesia, including in Lhokseumawe city, with a creative and integrated marketing approach. Mixue is known not only for the quality of its products, but also for its effective marketing communication strategies, such as the use of social media, intensive and consistent promotions and advertisements.

The approach in this study uses quantitative methods. Quantitative research relies on data collection in the form of numbers from measurements, therefore in this study statistics play an important role as a tool for analyzing answers to problems. The type of quantitative research used in this study is descriptive research. Descriptive research is research intended to investigate circumstances, conditions or other things that have been mentioned, the results of which are presented in the form of a research report.

In this study using a sampling technique, namely the Cluster Random Sampling technique. Cluster Random Sampling can be used if the sample population cannot be known with certainty, which allows no design related to the sampling frame, and there is a population that is randomly distributed or collected in different scopes.

To determine the research sample from the population, researchers used the Lemeshow formula because the population size was not known with certainty. The Lemeshaw formula (Slamet Riyanto, 2020: 13) will be used:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

By not knowing the number of customers visiting Mixue Lhokseumawe City, the number of samples was obtained by calculating using the Lemeshow formula (Slamet Riyanto, 2020: 13) as follows:

$$n = \frac{1,96^2 \times 0,5(1-0,5)}{0,10^2} = \frac{0,9604}{0,01} = 96,04$$

From the results of the calculation using the Lemeshow formula above, the minimum sample required in this study was rounded up to 100 respondents. The technique used in this research is simple linear regression analysis in this study using the help of the SPSS Statistics 20.0 for windows program.

$$Y = a + bx$$

RESULTS

Mixue Ice Cream and Tea is a beverage product from Zhengzhou, Henan, China. It was founded in June 1997 by Zhang Hongchao. This drink is a franchise-based company that offers soft ice cream and tea drinks. At present there are approximately 20,000 Mixue outlets spread across 11 countries including in Asia. In Indonesia, this drink has been present since 2020. Through PT Zhisheng Pacific Trading, the first mixue drink outlet in Indonesia was in the city of Bandung. The marketing system carried out by mixue products is to introduce the mascot that has been attached to this drink, namely "Snow King" which means snowman. The logo depicts a snowman with a crown, red cape and ice cream stick. Due to the popularity of this drink, the mascot is also used as a souvenir that is sold at each outlet. In 2021, Mixue launched a music video for the song "I Love You, You Love Me" as part of the Mixue campaign. Currently, Mixue drinks have reached almost all cities in Indonesia including small towns. This can be seen by the ease of finding mixue outlets.

Mixue Lhokseumawe branch has operating hours from 10:00-22:00 WIB. The most popular time for consumers to visit the Lhokseumawe branch of Mixue Mixue is at 17:00-21:00 WIB. Mixue Cream and Tea has a very attractive architectural building similar to other Mixue branches because the Mixue store design has been determined from the frenchise owner.

Description of Respondents

This study involved 100 respondents who were Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City. The characteristics of respondents in this study were studied based on four categories, namely gender, age, number of visits, and occupation.

Based on Gender

Analysis of the characteristics of respondents based on gender shows that out of a total of 100 respondents, 25 respondents (25.0%) were male and 75 respondents (75.0%) were female. This shows that the majority of Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City are women. This phenomenon is most likely due to the tendency of women's preference for products such as sweet drinks and ice cream, as well as the visual appeal

of the promotional strategies used by Mixue. Mixue's aesthetic visual approach and social media-based marketing communications are considered more effective in reaching the female consumer segment, which is generally more responsive to emotional messages and contemporary branding.

By Age

The age distribution of respondents shows that the age group of 15-25 years old dominates with 72 respondents (72.0%), followed by 26-40 years old with 17 respondents (17.0%), and 11 respondents above 40 years old (11.0%). This shows that Mixue has successfully reached young consumers who are active and adaptive to digital trends. This age group tends to have a high level of enthusiasm for new products, and is more active in using social media as a reference for lifestyle and consumption. Marketing communication strategies that are visual, creative, and based on digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are very effective in reaching this segment, while strengthening brand awareness and loyalty.

Based on Occupation

Based on occupation data, respondents were dominated by students as many as 63 people (63.0%), followed by employees and self-employed 10 people each (10.0%), housewives as many as 8 people (8.0%), and respondents with other occupations as many as 9 people (9.0%). This finding shows that students are the main consumer group for Mixue in Lhokseumawe City. The characteristics of students who are active, follow trends, and make places like Mixue as a social space and light recreation support the effectiveness of Mixue's integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy. Digital promotions, the use of iconic mascots, and fun visual campaigns contribute greatly to attracting attention and enhancing brand experience among students.

Based on Frequency of Visit

Based on the frequency of visits to Mixue outlets, respondents who visited 5-10 times constituted the largest group, namely 38 people (38.0%), followed by those who visited 3-5 times as many as 36 people (36.0%), and more than 10 times as many as 26 people (26.0%). This data indicates that most respondents are customers who have a fairly strong attachment to the brand. The high intensity of visits reflects the success of integrated marketing communication strategies implemented by Mixue in creating positive consumer experiences. Strategies such as loyalty programs, attractive digital campaigns, and aesthetic store atmosphere are able to encourage the frequency of visits while strengthening Mixue's brand equity among the younger generation, especially students.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Before conducting a simple linear regression analysis, first an instrument test is carried out, namely the validity test and reliability test. Based on the validity test, all instruments (question items / indicators) are declared valid, so they are suitable for use as research instruments. Meanwhile, based on the reliability test, the questionnaire used for each variable is declared reliable or reliable as a variable measuring instrument.

In addition to conducting instrument tests, classical assumption tests were also carried out which included normality tests, and heteroscedasticity tests. Based on the classical assumption test, it is concluded that the data is normally distributed and there is no heteroscedasticity. The table below shows the simple linear regression results:

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	22,818	4,309		5,296	,000
	Integrated Marketing Communication	,428	,043	,712	10,025	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

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Based on the table, the constant value of 22.818 indicates that when Integrated Marketing Communication (X) is zero, the value of Brand Equity (Y) remains at 22.818. This means that without an integrated marketing communication strategy, consumers still have a basic perception of the Mixue brand, possibly due to other factors such as product quality or global brand image.

The regression coefficient value of 0.428 indicates that each increase of one unit of IMC will increase Brand Equity by 0.428 units. The significance value (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that the effect of IMC on Brand Equity is statistically significant.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant influence between Integrated Marketing Communication on Brand Equity for Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City. The regression model obtained is:

$$Y = 22.818 + 0.428X$$

Hypothesis Testing

Coefficients ^a				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1 (Constant)	22,818	4,309		5,296
Integrated Marketing Communication	,428	,043	,712	10,025

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

The t test results show that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has a significant effect on Brand Equity, with a t-count value of 10.025 > t-table 1.984 and a significance of 0.000 < 0.05. This means that there is a positive and significant influence between IMC on Brand Equity for Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City.

This shows that Mixue's communication strategies through social media, promotions, advertisements, and other forms of communication are effective in strengthening consumer perceptions of the brand. Consistent and relevant communication is proven to increase awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Thus, Mixue needs to continue to develop a targeted IMC strategy to maintain and improve Brand Equity in the midst of market competition.

Correlation Coefficient

Correlations			
		Integrated Marketing Communication	Brand Equity
Integrated Marketing Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	,712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	100	100
Brand Equity	Pearson Correlation	,712**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,712 ^a	,506	,501	6,611

a. Predictors: (Constant), Integrated Marketing Communication

Based on the table, it is known that the R value is 0.712 or 71.2%, which indicates that there is a strong relationship between Integrated Marketing Communication and Brand Equity for Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City. This value indicates that the integrated marketing communication strategy implemented by Mixue has a close contribution in shaping brand perception in the eyes of consumers.

In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value is 0.506 or 50.6%, which means that 50.6% of the variation in Brand Equity can be explained by the Integrated Marketing Communication variable. The remaining 49.4% is explained by other factors not included in this research model, such as product quality, price, consumer experience, or other external factors.

Thus, these results indicate that the integrated marketing communication strategy has a fairly dominant role in shaping and increasing Mixue's brand equity. However, companies also need to pay attention to other factors outside of communication that can affect consumer perceptions and loyalty, so that brand strengthening can be done more thoroughly and sustainably.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the effect of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) on Brand Equity for Mixue consumers in Lhokseumawe City. The analysis was carried out using simple linear regression with the help of SPSS 20.0. The test results show that IMC has a positive and significant effect on Brand Equity, as evidenced by the t-count value of 10.025 > t-table 1.984 and a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

The highest mean value on the IMC variable is found in the statement "Mixue ads on social media attract my attention" (mean = 4.29), indicating that social media is the most effective communication channel. In contrast, the lowest mean value is found in the statement related to short-term promotions (mean = 3.81), indicating that discounts are not the main attraction for consumers.

On the Brand Equity variable, the statement "I recognize the Mixue brand when I see its logo or packaging" obtained the highest mean value (4.34), indicating success in building brand awareness through visual identity. However, emotional attachment to the brand is still relatively low (mean = 3.87), so it is an opportunity to strengthen emotional connections through a more personalized approach.

Overall, the mean value of IMC is 3.98 and Brand Equity is 4.09, both of which fall into the "agree" category. This indicates that Mixue's marketing communication strategy is considered quite effective and contributes to the company's brand equity.

These results are in line with Khasanah's (2019) research which also found that IMC has a significant effect on Brand Equity. Therefore, Mixue needs to continue to develop communication strategies that are more personalized, consistent, and relevant in order to strengthen long-term relationships with consumers in the midst of competitive market competition.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Equity Mixue in Lhokseumawe City. This means that the better the implementation of integrated marketing communication, the stronger the brand perception in the minds of consumers.

Advertising on social media is the most effective element in attracting consumer attention, while visual elements such as logos and packaging strengthen brand recognition. However, consumers' emotional attachment to the brand is still relatively low, so it needs a communication strategy that touches more on the emotional side to increase long-term loyalty.

This finding is in line with theory and previous research which confirms that effective IMC is able to form strong brand equity through consistent message delivery and in accordance with the characteristics of the target market.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions that have been obtained, there are several suggestions that can be given to Mixue Kota Lhokseumawe in improving the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication and strengthening Brand Equity:

1. Increase Consumer Emotional Attachment

Mixue is advised to build emotional closeness with its consumers through emotional branding approaches, such as delivering touching brand stories, sharing customer stories, and building more personalized and humanistic interactions on social media. This is important to create a stronger and more sustainable bond between consumers and brands.

2. Maximize Social Media Ad Content

Given that social media content has proven to be an effective channel, Mixue needs to continue to innovate in designing ads that are creative, interactive, and relevant to the lifestyle and preferences of local consumers. Collaboration with local influencers or content creators can also help reach a wider audience.

3. A More Strategic and Personalized Promotional Strategy

While short-term promotions have their appeal, Mixue needs to design a promotional strategy that is not only temporary, but also capable of building long-term relationships. Customer loyalty programs or emotional moment-based campaigns could be an alternative.

4. Consistency of Brand Image across All Channels

Mixue needs to maintain consistency in visual appearance such as logo, color, and packaging design across all communication channels, both online and offline. This is important to strengthen brand recall and create a professional and trusted impression in the eyes of consumers.

5. Utilizing Consumer Data for More Targeted Communication

Mixue is advised to start utilizing customer data more optimally, such as purchase history, taste preferences, or favorite locations to visit, in order to design a more targeted communication strategy. With this data-driven approach, Mixue can send more relevant promotions, product recommendations, or personalized messages and increase the likelihood of interaction and repeat purchases. The utilization of this data also supports integrated communication and responsiveness to consumer needs.

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