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The Role of Customer Experience in Increasing Brand Equity in the E-Commerce Industry

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of customer experience in building brand equity in the e-commerce industry in Indonesia. Using a descriptive and explanatory quantitative approach, this study involved 400 respondents who were selected through purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale-based questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression as well as path analysis. The results showed that all dimensions of customer experience, namely reliability, personalization, ease of use, speed of service, and interaction, had a significant influence on brand equity ($p < 0.05$). The reliability dimension exerts the greatest influence with a total effect of 0.40, followed by personalization with a total effect of 0.31. The study confirms that a positive customer experience can increase brand awareness, loyalty, and brand image, ultimately strengthening a company's position in the market. Strategic recommendations include improved reliability through logistics optimization, AI-based personalization, intuitive interface design, intensive customer interaction, and responsive customer service. This research contributes to the academic literature by providing empirical evidence in the context of Indonesian e-commerce and serves as a guide for companies to improve competitiveness through customer experience optimization.

Keyword: Customer Experience, Brand Equity, E-commerce, Reliability, Personalization, Customer Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the e-commerce industry in Indonesia has witnessed significant and rapid growth. This surge is largely attributed to various factors, including the expanding internet penetration, the widespread adoption of digital technologies, and the evolving behaviors of consumers, who have become more comfortable and confident with online transactions. The digital transformation, coupled with increased mobile phone usage, has facilitated seamless online shopping experiences, making it more accessible to people across the country. According to data from the Indonesian E-commerce Association (idEA), the

value of e-commerce transactions in Indonesia has reached trillions of rupiah annually, further underscoring the potential of the market. However, despite this promising growth, the industry faces several challenges, particularly in terms of customer retention. Many platforms are struggling to maintain customer loyalty as they grapple with intense competition from dominant players such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak. These leading e-commerce platforms constantly battle to not only attract new customers but also to ensure repeat business by fostering strong customer loyalty through positive, memorable experiences.

In the highly competitive e-commerce landscape, customer experience is a critical factor that can determine the success or failure of a platform. With an increasing number of online shoppers, customer expectations have soared, and they now seek platforms that provide more than just competitive prices. Customer experience in e-commerce encompasses a broad range of factors, including ease of platform navigation, speed of delivery, the quality of customer service, and the level of personalization provided. A seamless, positive shopping experience can significantly enhance the perception of the platform and influence a customer's decision to return for future purchases. According to a survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), approximately 73% of global consumers consider a positive customer experience to be a key determinant in their purchasing decisions. This finding is even more striking when compared to the importance placed on price, which traditionally has been a major factor in consumers' buying behavior. In the context of Indonesia, this global trend holds true, as Indonesian consumers are becoming increasingly demanding, seeking fast, friendly, and efficient services from e-commerce platforms. They not only expect quick transactions but also look for services that cater to their individual preferences, offering personalized shopping experiences that enhance their overall satisfaction.

Despite these clear customer expectations, many e-commerce platforms in Indonesia are still overly focused on competing through price wars and massive discount promotions. While these strategies can attract customers in the short term, they fail to address the deeper, more enduring needs of customers. Customers today are looking for more than just low prices—they seek platforms that offer convenience, reliability, and a personalized shopping experience. In fact, without a satisfactory experience, users are highly likely to switch to competitors that offer better service. This is particularly problematic in the e-commerce industry, where customers have multiple choices and can easily switch from one platform to another with minimal effort. This raises a significant question for e-commerce companies in Indonesia: how can they create an exceptional customer experience that goes beyond discounts and promotions to foster long-term brand equity? Building brand equity, which includes elements such as brand awareness, customer loyalty, and a positive brand image, requires much more than just offering low prices. It involves creating a platform that customers trust, enjoy using, and feel valued by.

The main objectives of this study are threefold. First, the study seeks to analyze the relationship between customer experience and brand equity in Indonesia's e-commerce industry. Second, it aims to identify the specific dimensions of customer experience that have the most significant impact on brand equity. Third, the study aims to provide strategic recommendations for e-commerce companies to enhance brand equity through the optimization of customer experience. This research is particularly timely as the e-commerce landscape in Indonesia continues to evolve rapidly, with new players entering the market and existing platforms striving to differentiate themselves by providing superior customer experiences. As technological advancements and digitalization increase, consumers in Indonesia have higher expectations regarding the quality of service they receive from e-commerce platforms. These consumers not only want fast, secure transactions but also seek personalized, enjoyable experiences that meet their individual needs and preferences.

The growing importance of personalization in e-commerce cannot be overstated. Consumers today expect e-commerce platforms to provide customized recommendations, tailored offers, and personalized communications. Features such as AI-based product recommendations, responsive customer service, and flexible payment options are crucial in ensuring a positive and personalized shopping experience. These elements help to create a sense of satisfaction and belonging for customers, encouraging them to return to the platform for future purchases. Moreover, e-commerce platforms that successfully create a positive customer experience tend to have stronger brand equity. A satisfied customer is more likely to recommend the platform to friends and family, leading to increased brand awareness and a positive brand image. This, in turn, can result in greater market share and improved competitive positioning in the long term. Therefore, customer experience not only impacts immediate customer loyalty but also has a long-term effect on a platform's market position and overall brand strength.

Nevertheless, creating an exceptional customer experience presents its own set of challenges. One of the main difficulties faced by e-commerce platforms in Indonesia is their ability to understand and cater to the diverse needs and preferences of their customers. Indonesia is a vast archipelago with varying levels of internet access and digital infrastructure. E-commerce platforms serve a wide range of market segments, from urban consumers with fast, reliable internet connections to those in remote areas with limited access to digital services. This geographical and demographic diversity poses challenges for e-commerce companies in delivering a uniform customer experience that satisfies all users. Some consumers may value fast delivery and a wide selection of products, while others may prioritize customer service or ease of use. Therefore, it is essential for e-commerce platforms to consider these variations in their customer experience strategies to effectively cater to the needs of different consumer segments.

This study also intends to explore how demographic and geographic factors affect consumers' perceptions of customer experience. Understanding the role that factors such as age, income, education, and location play in shaping customer preferences is crucial for e-commerce platforms seeking to optimize their services. For example, younger consumers may be more inclined to use platforms that offer seamless mobile experiences, while older consumers may prioritize platforms that provide clear and easy-to-follow instructions. Similarly, urban consumers may demand faster delivery options, while rural consumers may have more limited access to certain products and services. By analyzing these factors, this research aims to provide insights into how e-commerce platforms can tailor their customer experience strategies to meet the specific needs of different consumer groups.

By placing customer experience at the heart of this research, the study hopes to provide valuable insights for e-commerce players in Indonesia. These insights can help e-commerce companies improve customer satisfaction and, ultimately, build strong brand equity in an increasingly competitive market. By emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to customer experience—one that incorporates personalization, efficiency, and responsiveness—this research can serve as a guide for companies looking to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a foundation for future research on customer experience and brand equity in the e-commerce industry, both in Indonesia and in other regions with similar market dynamics. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, understanding the complex relationship between customer experience and brand equity will be essential for companies seeking to thrive in the global e-commerce market.

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The decision to use this methodology stems from the study's primary aim: to examine the relationship between customer experience and brand equity in Indonesia's e-commerce industry. The study seeks to identify which specific dimensions of customer experience—such as ease of use, service speed, personalization, reliability, and interaction—have the most significant influence on brand equity. By using a structured survey and a robust statistical analysis method, this research aims to offer insights that could aid in enhancing e-commerce strategies and improving customer satisfaction.

The population for this study includes active e-commerce platform users in Indonesia who have made at least two transactions in the past six months. These criteria ensure that the sample consists of individuals who are sufficiently familiar with the platform and its services, allowing for more accurate and relevant responses. The research uses purposive sampling to select respondents who meet these criteria. Additionally, participants must be 18 years or older, have experience using at least two different e-commerce platforms, and be willing to complete the full survey. This targeted sampling approach ensures that the data collected is from individuals who possess the necessary experience and insight into the factors influencing e-commerce experiences and brand perceptions.

To determine the sample size, the study uses Slovin's formula, assuming a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Based on this, approximately 400 respondents are estimated to participate. This sample size ensures that the results are statistically significant while also being representative of the broader population of Indonesian e-commerce users.

Data collection for the study is carried out via an online questionnaire, which is distributed through various social media channels and relevant e-commerce platforms. This approach enables the researchers to reach a wide and diverse group of respondents, ensuring that the sample includes individuals from different geographic locations, demographic backgrounds, and e-commerce usage patterns. The questionnaire is designed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This scale allows respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to different dimensions of customer experience, such as the ease of use, reliability, service speed, personalization, and interaction. It also assesses respondents' perceptions of brand equity, focusing on brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand image. By using this scale, the study can quantify respondents' perceptions and measure the strength of the relationships between customer experience and brand equity.

Before the actual survey is distributed, the research instrument undergoes a pilot study with 30 respondents to test its validity and reliability. Validity is tested through Pearson's correlation analysis, which examines the relationship between individual survey items and the overall score. Items with a correlation value greater than 0.3 are considered valid. Reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the internal consistency of the survey items. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7 indicates that the instrument is reliable and that the items consistently measure the same constructs.

The data collected through the survey is analyzed using inferential statistical methods. Initially, descriptive statistics are used to outline the characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of data. This provides an overview of the demographic and behavioral profiles of the participants, helping to contextualize the findings. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analysis is conducted to test the relationship between the independent variables (the dimensions of customer experience) and the dependent variable (brand equity). This analysis will help to determine which customer experience dimensions have the most significant effect on brand equity.

Before conducting the regression analysis, several classical assumptions must be checked to ensure the data meets the necessary conditions for valid analysis. These assumptions include normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. Normality tests ensure that the data follows a normal distribution, which is essential for the validity of the regression results. Multicollinearity tests check whether the independent variables are highly correlated with each other, as this can distort the regression analysis. Heteroscedasticity tests ensure that the variability of the errors in the regression model is constant across all levels of the independent variables, and autocorrelation tests check for correlation between residuals, which can also affect the validity of the regression results. Ensuring that these assumptions are met is crucial for obtaining accurate and reliable results from the analysis.

In addition to the regression analysis, path analysis is conducted to further explore the relationships between customer experience dimensions and brand equity. Path analysis is particularly useful in understanding complex relationships between multiple variables. It allows the researchers to examine not only direct effects but also indirect effects that one variable may have on another through mediating variables. This technique helps to reveal the intricate ways in which customer experience influences brand equity, providing deeper insights into the mechanisms that drive customer satisfaction and loyalty in e-commerce.

The results of these analyses are presented in the form of tables, graphs, and diagrams, making it easier for readers to interpret the findings and draw meaningful conclusions. These visual representations help to highlight the key relationships and trends in the data, making the results more accessible and actionable for e-commerce companies seeking to improve their customer experience strategies.

To complement the quantitative analysis, the study also includes qualitative analysis in the form of short interviews with selected respondents. These interviews are conducted to gather deeper insights into the personal experiences of e-commerce users. By engaging in direct conversations with consumers, the researchers can explore the nuances of customer experience that may not be captured in the structured questionnaire. These interviews also provide an opportunity to uncover consumers' expectations for future improvements in e-commerce services, offering valuable feedback that can inform strategic recommendations for enhancing customer experience and building brand equity.

The mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis, strengthens the study by providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between customer experience and brand equity. The qualitative insights enrich the quantitative findings, offering a more holistic view of the factors that influence consumer behavior in the e-commerce sector.

Ultimately, the research aims to provide valid, reliable, and actionable results that can help e-commerce companies in Indonesia develop more effective strategies for improving customer satisfaction and building stronger brand equity. By identifying the key dimensions of customer experience that drive brand equity, the study offers strategic recommendations for e-commerce platforms to optimize their services and differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market. Additionally, the study is expected to lay the foundation for future research on customer experience and brand equity, contributing to the academic literature and helping e-commerce companies navigate the evolving digital landscape.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Based on data obtained from 400 respondents, demographic characteristics show that the majority of respondents are between 21 and 30 years old (54%) and dominated by women (60%). As many as 75% of respondents have experience using more than two e-commerce platforms, with Shopee and Tokopedia being the most frequently used platforms. The data also showed that the dimensions of "ease of use" and "speed of service" obtained the highest average scores of 4.5 and 4.3 on the 5-point Likert scale, respectively.

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Age 18-20 years	80	20%
Age 21-30 years old	216	54%
Age 31-40 years	76	19%
Age >40 years	28	7%
Gender: Male	160	40%
Gender: Female	240	60%
Experience: < 2 platforms	100	25%
Experience: \geq 2 platforms	300	75%

Source : Data processed, 2025

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test results show that all questionnaire items have an item-total correlation value of > 0.3 , which means valid. The reliability test resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.89 for customer experience and 0.87 for brand equity, which indicates that the research instrument has a good level of internal consistency.

Hypothesis Test Results

The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that all dimensions of customer experience have a significant influence on brand equity ($p < 0.05$). The "reliability" dimension had the greatest influence with a beta coefficient value of 0.35, followed by "personality" with a beta of 0.28.

Table 2 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Koef Beta	Sig (p-value)	Decision
H1: Ease of Use \rightarrow Brand Equity	0,22	0,001	Accepted
H2: Brand Equity \rightarrow Reliability	0,35	0,000	Accepted
H3: Personalization \rightarrow Brand Equity	0,28	0,002	Accepted
H4: Service Speed \rightarrow Brand Equity	0,21	0,005	Accepted
H5: Brand Equity \rightarrow Interaction	0,19	0,010	Accepted

Source : Data processed, 2025

Coefficient of Determination

An Adjusted R-squared value of 0.62 indicates that 62% of brand equity variability can be explained by customer experience dimensions. The rest is influenced by other factors that were not studied in this study.

Path Analysis

The results of the path analysis show that reliability has the greatest direct influence on brand equity, while personalization has an indirect influence through customer trust. The path chart shows a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of customer experience and brand equity.

Table 3 Path Analysis

Dimension	Influence Immediately	Influence Indirect	Total Influence
Customer Experience			
Ease of Use	0,22	0,04	0,26
Reliability	0,35	0,05	0,40
Personalized	0,28	0,03	0,31
Speed of Service	0,21	0,02	0,23
Interaction	0,19	0,01	0,20

Explanation and Implications

This finding highlights the critical role of customer experience in fostering brand equity, especially in the competitive landscape of the Indonesian e-commerce industry. As businesses strive to build strong brand identities, they must recognize the power of delivering a consistent, reliable experience to customers. One of the key factors that significantly influences customer trust and loyalty is the “reliability” dimension. This dimension encompasses aspects such as delivery speed and service accuracy, which are essential in building consumer confidence. Research by Fang et al. (2020) and Chahal & Dutta (2021) emphasizes that service reliability is crucial in shaping consumers' perceptions of brand quality. When consumers experience timely deliveries and accurate services, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards the brand, leading to higher loyalty rates. In the highly competitive e-commerce market in Indonesia, where customers have numerous choices, service reliability plays a pivotal role in distinguishing one brand from another and retaining customers in the long term.

Furthermore, the dimension of personalization is also a key driver of brand equity. Personalization refers to the ability of e-commerce platforms to cater to individual customer preferences, providing relevant product recommendations based on previous interactions and behavior. This aspect of customer experience plays a significant role in making customers feel valued and understood. Kusnandar et al. (2022) conducted research within the Indonesian e-commerce context, showing that artificial intelligence (AI)-driven service personalization can significantly enhance customer engagement. This personalization not only makes the shopping experience more enjoyable but also positively influences customers' perceptions of the brand, leading to stronger emotional connections. Schmitt (2020) supports this view, stating that emotional experiences created through personalized interactions can solidify the bond between the customer and the brand, ultimately influencing long-term loyalty.

The implications of these findings extend to the strategic decisions businesses must make in allocating resources to enhance their customer experience. To meet the growing expectations of customers in Indonesia, e-commerce companies must prioritize investments in both reliability and personalization. For example, integrating AI technologies into the platform can enhance the personalization of recommendations, ensuring customers receive product suggestions that are tailored to their preferences. In parallel, improving logistics infrastructure to ensure timely deliveries and accurate order fulfillment will address the reliability aspect. Verhoef et al. (2021) corroborates this by showing that companies that design a seamless and personalized customer experience are more likely to improve customer satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction translates directly into stronger brand equity, which is fundamental for achieving long-term success in the e-commerce sector.

Beyond individual customer satisfaction, fostering a positive customer experience has broader implications for the brand's overall competitiveness in the marketplace. Brand equity, which represents the value a brand adds to a product, is increasingly seen as a competitive advantage. In the Indonesian e-commerce market, where consumers are increasingly looking for brands that provide not only quality products but also exceptional service, a company's ability to manage its customer experience can become a significant differentiator. By continually enhancing service reliability and personalization, companies can boost customer loyalty, thereby expanding their market share. This not only improves customer retention but also attracts new customers who are drawn to a brand with a reputation for delivering superior service.

The importance of customer experience in building brand equity, especially through reliability and personalization, cannot be overstated in the Indonesian e-commerce sector. As the market continues to evolve, businesses must adapt to changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. This research offers valuable insights into the strategic value of customer experience management in the modern marketplace. It underscores the need for e-commerce platforms to prioritize these dimensions as part of their growth strategies. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the academic literature by providing empirical evidence of the significant role customer experience plays in enhancing brand equity in a rapidly changing and dynamic market environment. By focusing on these critical areas, companies can strengthen their position in the Indonesian e-commerce market, ensuring long-term success through sustained customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlight the crucial role of customer experience in shaping brand equity within the Indonesian e-commerce industry. Specifically, the "reliability" dimension has the most profound impact on brand equity, influencing it both directly and indirectly through the establishment of customer trust. This dimension encompasses essential factors such as fast delivery times, order accuracy, and consistent service quality, which all contribute to a positive customer experience. In a market where consumer choice is abundant, reliability emerges as a cornerstone for fostering consumer confidence and ensuring that customers return for repeat purchases. However, reliability alone is not enough. The study also shows that personalization, ease of use, speed of service, and effective interaction are pivotal elements in building customer loyalty and creating favorable brand perceptions. Personalization, for instance, helps brands resonate with customers by tailoring experiences based on their preferences, which can greatly influence emotional attachment to the brand. Furthermore, a seamless user experience, efficient services, and frequent engagement with customers all combine to reinforce loyalty and enhance overall brand equity.

These findings firmly establish that customer experience is a central determinant in achieving competitive advantage in the rapidly evolving Indonesian e-commerce landscape. As competition intensifies, the companies that can offer an exceptional customer experience will not only secure higher levels of customer satisfaction but also foster long-term brand loyalty, which is instrumental in expanding market share. The study's implications offer actionable insights that e-commerce businesses can leverage to boost their brand equity. Based on the research findings, several strategic recommendations can be made to enhance customer experience and strengthen brand equity.

First, e-commerce companies must prioritize service reliability as a key pillar of their strategy. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by investing in advanced logistics technology that can support fast, accurate, and efficient delivery systems. Timely and reliable deliveries build trust with customers and reinforce the brand's reputation for dependability. This investment in logistics infrastructure should be viewed as a critical aspect of ensuring

customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. Second, the integration of data analytics and AI-driven personalization technologies can significantly enhance the customer experience by offering tailored product recommendations based on individual browsing and purchasing behavior. Personalization not only makes customers feel valued, but it also increases their likelihood of repeat purchases, thus driving brand loyalty. Companies should invest in AI tools that continuously learn and adapt to customer preferences, further optimizing the online shopping experience.

Third, improving the usability of the e-commerce platform is vital for maintaining a positive customer experience. A user-friendly website or mobile application with intuitive navigation, easy search functions, and a straightforward checkout process can drastically reduce friction in the shopping journey. When customers are able to quickly find what they are looking for and make purchases with minimal effort, it creates a sense of satisfaction and convenience that enhances their overall perception of the brand. Thus, prioritizing a seamless and efficient user interface is essential for fostering a positive customer experience.

Fourth, strengthening customer interaction is another key aspect that can significantly contribute to brand equity. Loyalty programs, targeted promotions, and interactive communication channels on social media platforms can help create a more personalized and engaging experience for customers. These interactions not only promote customer retention but also generate word-of-mouth marketing, which is highly influential in the e-commerce space. Brands that successfully foster an emotional connection with their customers through these means will benefit from stronger relationships, which can lead to higher customer lifetime value.

Finally, the speed of customer service is an area that requires continuous improvement. In the fast-paced world of e-commerce, customers expect quick responses to inquiries, complaints, or requests for assistance. Implementing AI-powered chatbots for instant responses, coupled with highly responsive customer service teams, ensures that customers' needs are met promptly. Quick resolution of issues, combined with a proactive approach to customer support, strengthens the customer's perception of the brand as reliable and attentive. By strategically implementing these recommendations, e-commerce companies in Indonesia can create an exceptional customer experience that directly contributes to strengthening brand equity. A superior customer experience, fueled by reliability, personalization, ease of use, speed, and effective communication, will not only enhance brand perception but also provide the foundation for sustained competitiveness in the highly dynamic e-commerce market. In an industry where consumer expectations are continuously evolving, businesses that consistently invest in these customer experience elements will be better positioned to thrive and maintain their competitive edge.

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